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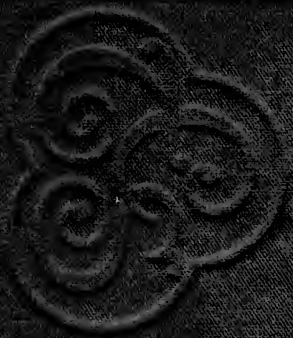

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MONSIGNOR HUGH BENSON.

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MONSIGNOR HUGH BENSON

(1871–1914)

By ALLAN ROSS
(*Priest of the London Oratory*)

"Being made perfect in a short space, he fulfilled a long time."
WISDOM iv. 13.

INTRODUCTION

IT would be impossible in the limited space available to do justice to the subject of this brief biography. He managed to accomplish so much in so short a time, he was so many-sided in his activities, he was so well known among the men of this generation, there is so much that might be said about him and which must perforce be left unsaid, that it will only be possible to give a brief outline of his life, and then describe some of its outstanding features. The object, therefore, of this brief appreciation of one who passed meteor-like across the horizon of the Church, will be to interest its readers in Hugh Benson, priest of the Catholic Church, in the hope that it will draw them to study his interesting personality more fully in the official biography [1] which will be issued in due course, and above all in the many writings which his versatile genius has bequeathed to posterity.

The reader will find the personality of the writer stamped upon their pages—his sincerity, his dis-

like of cant and conventionalism, his mistrust of the feelings as a reliable guide of human conduct, his marvellous imaginative power and dramatic instinct, his keen powers of observation, his hatred of display, his zeal for souls. And he will find, too, in these books the impress of the man of prayer, who recognizes that union with God is the supreme work of man in this life—whether that union be obtained by the faithful discharge of the duties of one's state of life, with its background of prayer, or whether it be obtained—as in the case of those who have the call—by a life of contemplation. Hugh Benson was a man of prayer, inasmuch as prayer formed the background to his life of strenuous activity, and helped him to go forth with the heart of an apostle, and proclaim the Catholic Church as the authentic interpreter of God's revelation to men and as the divinely appointed means of healing the breach between God and His creatures.

Perhaps it may not be out of place to make here a few remarks on mysticism, because it is very conspicuous in Hugh Benson's writings, and also because it is a subject concerning which there is a good deal of misapprehension.

It is a commonly received opinion that a mystic is a useless dreamer, ever wrapped away from earth, and incapable of taking any practical interest in earthly things. But such is not the Catholic Church's view. She recognizes in mysticism a motive power which impels to real activities, as in the case of such typical mystics as St. Francis de Sales, St. Teresa, and St. Catherine of Siena, whose lives were so very strenuous because of their conscious perception of the Divine presence. She does not teach that

all mystics are saints ; for it may well be that true mystical experience, although supernatural, may be compatible with lives of holiness which do not reach the lofty heights of heroic virtue, in which true sanctity consists ; but she recognizes in mysticism a potent factor in the active life of individuals.

If we use mystical experience to denote " conscious personal touch with God," [2] then a mystic is one who has passed through the lower degrees of prayer and attained to that degree which is called the prayer of contemplation. There is no need here to give a description of the generally accepted divisions of prayer, as classified by recognized teachers in the Catholic Church, for there are many classical treatises on prayer, among which St. Teresa's *The Interior Castle* is one of the best known, with its seven different mansions. But perhaps it may be permissible to draw attention to the view upheld by teachers of authority that contemplative prayer is within the reach of all. This view, which certainly has much to recommend it, has been clearly set forth in a recent work,[3] where the writer supports his conclusions by the teaching of four of the greatest teachers on prayer in the Church, all four canonized saints, two of them being at the same time great theologians and doctors of the Church —St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. Francis de Sales. According to this view, " those who pray in earnest and are desirous of giving themselves up to God entirely by all-round detachment usually go on to the contemplative way." [4]

If it be asked why so comparatively few attain to contemplation, the answer may be given in the

words of St. John of the Cross : " because only a few are ready to enter into the void and into complete detachment of spirit." [5] To obtain from God the graces necessary for contemplation, one must be faithful to the different practices of the spiritual life, meditation, mortification, and self-renunciation, but if this preparation " be faithfully made, God, unless some quite exceptional purpose intervene, will never fail at the proper time to grant special graces enabling one to contemplate." [6]

There are different degrees of contemplative prayer, and if comparatively few attain even to the lowest degree, far fewer are they who are sufficiently heroic to reach the higher. But contemplation is essentially " no other thing than a loving, simple, and permanent attention of the spirit to divine things," [7] comprising a certain consciousness of God's presence. " Oh ! how happy is the soul who, in the tranquillity of her heart, lovingly preserves the sacred feeling of God's presence. . . . Now when I speak here of the sacred sentiment of God's presence, I do not mean to speak of a sensible feeling, but of that which resides in the summit and supreme point of the spirit, where heavenly love reigns and conducts its principal exercises." [8]

The soul, then, which reaches contemplation attains in prayer to a certain consciousness of God's presence, and according to the teaching here emphasized, " contemplation is the normal goal of the spiritual life," [9] though it can only be attained at the cost of labour and self-renunciation, in other words, by a faithful putting into practice of the exercises of the spiritual life, for " if we had to describe the preparation to be under-

gone by the soul for contemplation, a whole treatise on asceticism would be needed." [10]

But the soul which has passed through the lower degrees of prayer and reached the state of contemplation, is permeated by a supernatural source of energy, which manifests itself in active works for God. If such a soul lives in the world, it feels impelled to labour generously for God's sake, and I take it that such was the case with Hugh Benson. That meditation, in his case, had passed into a prayer of greater simplicity, is, I think, to be gathered from his own writings, and that he was an ardent advocate of prayer seems to be one of the characteristics of his life. It can be gathered from his books, and is formally expressed in the Preface which he wrote to a work on prayer [11]: "There is one supreme mode of sanctification which . . . is accessible practically everywhere to souls that desire it, and that is the Way of Prayer. . . . If one thing is absolutely clear from the dogmatic as well as from the ascetic teaching of the Church, it is that a life of Prayer, tending to perfection, is within the reach of every devout Christian."

HIS LIFE

Robert Hugh Benson was born at Wellington College on November 16, 1871, his father, who ultimately became Archbishop of Canterbury, being at the time head master there. He was the youngest of six children, two of whom, Arthur and Frederick, subsequently attained, like himself, to literary distinction. Some interesting details of his childhood have been given us by the former in a very sympathetic memoir, *Hugh*, and certainly he seems to have given no promise in those

early days of any exceptional powers. "Speaking generally," his brother writes, "I should call him in those days a quick, inventive, active-minded child, entirely unsentimental; he was fond of trying his hand at various things, but he was impatient and volatile, would never take any trouble, and as a consequence never did anything well."

In 1885 he won a scholarship at Eton, and joined the school in September, his elder brother Arthur being at the time a master there. After three or four years, he decided that he wished to compete for the Indian Civil Service, and in order to give him a better opportunity of success, he was removed from Eton to Wren's coaching establishment in London. It is not stated whether Hugh took up the work of preparation for the Indian Civil Service seriously. Anyhow, when he went up in the summer of 1890 he failed to pass, and it was decided that he should go up to Trinity College, Cambridge, to study for classical honours. He does not appear to have worked very hard, nor to have shown any intellectual promise. Having eventually decided to take Orders, he went in 1892 to study with Dean Vaughan, at Llandaff, and was ordained deacon by his father in Croydon parish church in 1894. He began his clerical work at the Eton mission, and was fully ordained in 1895, but at the end of 1896 his health broke down, and he went to Egypt for the winter with his mother and sister.

It was now that Hugh began to have doubts about the Anglican Church. He realized how very little that Church counted for abroad: it seemed to be something carried about with Englishmen wherever they went, like an

Indiarubber bath—to use his own somewhat irreverent simile ; it seemed quite foreign to the country where it was planted. Entering the Catholic church in a village in Egypt, he was struck by the contrast. It was a poor little mud building, but it seemed so obviously part of the place that for the first time it occurred to him, seriously, that Rome might after all be right. These uncomfortable feelings deepened as he journeyed home through Palestine, but a year at Kemsing as curate somewhat soothed his anxieties. He then conceived the wish to practise the religious life, and was accepted as a probationer in the Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield. His first two years were spent mainly in study, and finally in July, 1901, he took the vows.

Hugh was destined to spend two more years at Mirfield ; the first of which passed happily enough, but then the old difficulties returned, and in such an intensified form that he left the Community in the early summer of 1903, and was received into the Catholic Church in September of the same year.

He has left us an account [12] of the steps which led to his conversion, and it may be well to summarize them briefly. He had gradually come to see "the need of a Teaching Church to preserve and interpret the truths of Christianity to each succeeding generation," and he saw too that this same Teaching Church must know her own mind with regard to the treasure committed to her charge. But when he considered the Anglican Church, he realized that it did not correspond to his expectations. Diverse views were allowed on certain vital points, such as the Sacra-

ment of Penance. He himself was convinced that it was essential to the forgiveness of mortal sins and that it formed an integral part of the sacramental system instituted by Jesus Christ; but although this view was tolerated, "practically all the Bishops denied this, and a few of them the power of absolution altogether." In other words, he was simply teaching his own private opinion on a matter which was indefinite, so far as the Anglican Church was concerned. He saw the fallacy of relying on written formularies which can be interpreted in more senses than one, without a living voice to declare their real meaning, and that a Church which "appeals merely to ancient written words can be no more at the best than an antiquarian society." In this particular instance, the question of the Sacrament of Penance, he wished to know whether he might or might not teach penitents that they were bound to confess their mortal sins before Communion, but he could get no satisfactory answer. But this was only one case out of many, for there were many other questions which troubled him, and upon which he could get no definite teaching from the Anglican Church. To use his own words: "I saw round me a Church, which, even if tolerable in theory was intolerable in practice." On the other hand, he beheld the Catholic Church, which certainly knew its own mind, and which taught with the most refreshing clearness upon the subjects which troubled him; but there were difficulties in the way of accepting its claims, such as the definition of the Immaculate Conception in the nineteenth century, and the Papal claims.

There seemed to Hugh to be nothing for it but

to plunge blindly into the bewildering maze of controversy and read what the Catholic Church's partisans and opponents had to say upon the matter. Gradually he began to realize things which he had never realized before. One of these things was to find that the true Church of Christ could not be an affair of intellect alone, otherwise the unlearned and slow-witted would be at an obvious disadvantage in the matter of salvation. "Humility and singleness of motive I saw now were far more important than patristic learning." Our Lord's words acquired in this light a new and unsuspected depth of meaning: "Unless you be converted and become as little children you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." [13] He began to pray more earnestly than ever for light, and at this stage of his journey certain books helped especially to "break down on one side the definite difficulties that stood between me and Rome, and on the other the last remnants of theory that held me to the Church of England." These books were Mallock's *Doctrine and Doctrinal Disruption,* Spencer Jones's *England and the Holy See,* and Newman's *The Development of Doctrine,* the last named of which "like a magician, waved away the floating mists, and let me see the City of God in her strength and beauty. He saw the Catholic Church as the true Church of the ages standing "upon the unshakeable foundation of the Gospel." He recognized her as the mystical Bride of Christ, and difficulty after difficulty melted as he looked upon her face. And then he turned and looked again at the Church of England and behold, there was an extraordinary change. "It was not that she had become un-

*

lovable. . . . She had a hundred virtues, a delicate speech, a romantic mind ; a pleasant aroma hung about her ; she was infinitely pathetic and appealing ; she had the advantage of dwelling in the shadowed twilight of her own vagueness, in glorious houses, even though not of her building ; she had certain gracious ways, pretty modes of expression ; her music and her language still seem to me extraordinarily beautiful ; and above all, she is the nursing mother of many of my best friends, and for over thirty years educated and nursed me too with indulgent kindness. . . . There, then, she stood, my old mistress, pathetic and loving, claiming me as her servant by every human tie ; and there on the other side, in a blaze of fierce light, stood the Bride of Christ, dominant and imperious but with a look in her eyes, and a smile on her lips, that could only rise from a heavenly vision, claiming me, not because she had as yet done anything for me, not because I was an Englishman who loved English ways or even an Italian, for the matter of that —but simply and solely because I was a child of God, and because to her He had said : 'Take away this child for Me and I will give thee thy wages' ; because, first and last, she was His Bride, and I was His son." In other words, he had now become convinced of the truth of the Catholic Church's claims, and so felt it his duty to sever his connection with the Community at Mirfield.

The months which elapsed after Hugh left Mirfield and before he was received into the Catholic Church were spent at "Tremans," his mother's secluded house at Horsted Keynes in Sussex. He had made up his mind that it was

his duty to become a Catholic and had made this clear to his mother, from whom he had no secrets, but at her request, he waited in order to allow time for a reaction, if such should come. He passed the time in writing an historical novel, *By What Authority?* an occupation which not only proved to be a safety-valve for his sorely tried spirits, but also enabled him to see more clearly than ever that the Anglican Communion possessed no identity of life with the ancient Church in England. By the beginning of September the novel was three-quarters finished, and on September 11th its author was received into the Catholic Church at Woodchester by Father Reginald Buckler, O.P.

Hugh Benson left England for Rome on All Saints' Day, 1903, and before leaving had the satisfaction of putting the finishing touches to his first novel, *By What Authority?* A year later he returned to England, a duly ordained priest of the Catholic Church, and ere long settled down at Cambridge, where he took up his residence with Monsignor Barnes at Llandaff House. He passed two or three years at Cambridge, but began to realize that his work lay more in the direction of writing and preaching than in purely pastoral duties. Moreover, he was now beginning to make an income from his books, and so was able to give effect to the project which had shaped itself in his mind. He proposed to make for himself a home in some secluded spot, where he would be freed from interruptions, and where he might read and write and from time to time go forth to preach as occasion presented itself. "A small Perpendicular chapel and a whitewashed cottage next door is what I want just now," he wrote

about this time: "it must be in a sweet and secret place—preferably in Cornwall." [14] The result was the purchase of a house in the hamlet of Hare Street, near Buntingford, where he spent the last seven years of his life.

Hare Street House [15] is an old-fashioned house standing a little way back from the main road which passes through the village. The front is a later addition, but the building itself dates back to Tudor times. When Hugh Benson bought it, it had not been occupied for a long while, and so the property was practically a wilderness. When he died it had been transformed, and stamped with his own peculiar individuality. He laid out the grounds to suit his fancy, and one of his last acts in this direction was to plan a rose-garden at the back of the house—an idea which was to have been put into execution on his return from the visit to Salford which proved his last. He found an old brew-house and a bake-house behind the house: the former he turned into a chapel, the latter he pulled down and re-built on a much smaller scale as a sacristy. A rood screen was formed out of one of the heavy brew-house beams, the figure on the top being carved by himself and a friend out of one of the lime-trees in the garden. So, too, with the other accessories of the little chapel, either the owner himself had a direct hand in them, or they were the outcome of his suggestions. It is the same with the house—turn where you will you find reminiscences of the owner. If you go into the delightful study where he used to write, you will find all round the walls above the panelling an elaborate tapestry representing various personages, including himself, in quest of the Holy Grail.

The figures, which were cut out by an artist friend, were sewn on to the background and all the tapestry-work done by the owner. If you pass from the study into the library, you will find similar traces of his activity in the choice and arrangement of the books which line the walls. Or if you go upstairs, you will find in the central bedroom another piece of tapestry representing a somewhat gruesome subject, "Death," once again in conception and execution the work of Hugh Benson. Whenever you ask the history of any object that strikes you, you receive almost invariably the same reply, that the owner of the house made it himself or had a hand in its production, or had some particular idea in connection with it. Surely never was a place more stamped with the individuality of a man than Hare Street House and grounds are stamped with the individuality of Hugh Benson.

It was thus that a hamlet in Hertfordshire became the home of this gifted man, and that Hare Street House became the centre of an influence which not only made itself felt throughout the length and breadth of England but even in distant parts. He went to Rome on three different occasions to preach courses of sermons, and three times visited America to lecture and preach ; but, naturally enough, his most strenuous activities were confined to England. He was always doing something—preaching here, or lecturing there, or giving a Retreat at some convent, and yet he found time on his return to Hare Street House to write book after book, and to deal with an enormous correspondence. It is difficult to conceive how any man could accomplish so much work, but there was a motive force in Hugh Benson

which impelled him on and sustained him, and enabled him to work unceasingly at the highest pressure.

About a year before his death he wrote: "I am being obliged to draw in my horns and economize time, and everything else just now, as I am on the very edge of my capacities." It was thus that he worked—on the very edge of his capacities—and he maintained this tremendous rate of speed up to the end, when the overdriven machine broke down completely, and Hugh Benson died at an age when most men reach the maturity of their powers, worn out by his own untiring and indomitable energy. He seems to have considered that his best work would be done before the age of forty, and that he must work himself out by then, like a runner who knows that he has a certain distance to go and must run himself out by the time he breasts the tape. He succeeded in accomplishing his aim, and when he died, at the age of forty-two, he had, to use the metaphor of the athlete, run himself to a standstill. "Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly"; [16] and certainly this was true of Hugh Benson. We have it on the authority of those who knew him, that whatever he did, he did with a certain concentrated energy which showed that he was heart and soul in it. Whether it was a book, or a letter, or a game, or a conversation, he gave his whole attention to it; and no one who has ever heard him preach could fail to be struck by this characteristic.

The hand of death struck him down in the very midst of his strenuous activities, and he died as he had lived, clear-minded to the last. This feature of his death seems to have impressed

itself upon his brother, who was present, and who has recorded his impressions in the following expressive words: "It was wonderful indeed! It seemed to me then, in that moment, strange rather than sad. He had been *himself* to the very end, no diminution of vigour, no yielding, no humiliation, with all his old courtesy and thoughtfulness, and collectedness—that is the only word I can use. I recognized that we were only the spectators, and that he was in command of the scene. He had made haste to die, and he had gone as he was always used to do, straight from one finished task to another that waited for him. It was not like an end; it was as though he had turned a corner and was passing on, out of sight but still unquestionably there. It seemed to me like the death of a soldier or a knight in its calmness of courage, its splendid facing of the last extremity, its magnificent determination to experience, open-eyed and vigilant, the dark crossing." [17]

Hugh Benson died at Bishop's House, Salford, on October 19, 1914, aged forty-two years and eleven months. He had gone there on Saturday, October 10th, to deliver the second of a course of sermons which he was preaching at Salford Cathedral during the month of October. On Monday the 12th he was so ill that he could not leave Salford, and all immediate engagements were cancelled. A few days later pneumonia supervened, and as his heart was not sufficiently strong to stand the strain, he passed away in the early hours of the following Monday.

A paper of directions was found stating that he wished to be interred at Hare Street House. Thither accordingly his body was conveyed, and

there on Friday the 23rd October, after a solemn Requiem in the little chapel, he was laid to rest in his own orchard, close to the Calvary which he had himself erected. There seems a certain appropriateness in the fact that he who had been the living soul of Hare Street House should be buried in the very spot which he had loved so well and upon which he had contrived to stamp so wonderfully the impress of his own marked individuality.

THE MAN

And now comes the task of appraising the man himself. He was so many-sided that it is difficult to know where to begin ; but perhaps it will be simpler to lay special stress on that aspect of his life by which he was able to reach the greatest number of persons. A man may have great eloquence, and may be able to draw great congregations, but the power of the spoken word is limited in extent, though doubtless more potent in its immediate efficacy. The human voice cannot carry beyond a certain range, it is circumscribed by the holding capacity of buildings ; it cannot stand very much prolonged strain, and though its immediate efficacy is sometimes astonishing, yet, as regards diffusion and ability to reach all classes and conditions of men, it cannot compare with the written word. Let us therefore begin with Hugh Benson as a man of letters, and say something about the numerous books which were the offspring of his ever-active pen.

The first thing that strikes one is his amazing fertility. He began writing books about ten years before he died, but before his hand was stilled by death he had written more than a score, most

of them novels of considerable length, many of which must have entailed no small amount of reading. He wrote some half-dozen historical romances, for example, which must have involved a good deal of serious study. Indeed, he has himself given us an insight into his painstaking efforts when he wrote his first historical romance, *By What Authority?* for in *Confessions of a Convert* we find the following allusion to it: "I worked for about eight or ten hours every day, either writing or reading or annotating every historical book and pamphlet I could lay my hands upon. I found paragraphs in magazines, single sentences in certain essays, and all of these I somehow worked into the material from which my book grew."

It was the same, too, with the historical romances which he wrote later on in life. If any one imagines that these romances are the effervescences of a brilliant imagination, let him turn for example to the Preface of *Come Rack! Come Rope!* (published in 1912) and he will find himself disillusioned. The writer states that nearly the whole book is sober historical fact, and acknowledges his indebtedness to "a pile of some twenty or thirty books" which were on his table as he wrote.

It would seem, then, that he was a painstaking writer, although his books give one the idea that writing came quite naturally to him, and that he dashed them off at full speed, with scarcely a pause for reflection.

Most readers of his books would probably be of the opinion that Hugh Benson's peculiar gifts as a writer were displayed to best advantage in works of pure fiction. When chained down to definite facts in history, his imaginative powers

were not given full scope ; but he revelled in analysis of character, and was seen at his very best in the creations of his own vivid imagination. For this reason if we would seek for any self-revelation in his writings it is to these books that we must turn, and we have a goodly number to draw material from. We have Mr. Arthur Benson's authority for the statement that his brother's books "are all projections of his own personality into his characters. He is behind them all, and writing with Hugh was like so many things that he did, a game which he played with all his might." [18] With this statement I am quite ready to agree, though I must confess that I do not share his admiration for *The Light Invisible*. The tales have not a genuine ring about them ; they seem rather like the creations of one groping after something, and yet not knowing exactly what it is that he wishes to express, and so, as a consequence, they are unsatisfying. The explanation of this is given in *Confessions of a Convert* : "For myself, I dislike, quite intensely, *The Light Invisible* from the spiritual point of view. I wrote it in moods of great feverishness and in what I now recognize as a very subtle state of sentimentality ; I was striving to reassure myself of the truths of religion, and assume, therefore, a positive and assertive tone that was largely insincere."

However, apart from *The Light Invisible*, we have over a dozen works of pure fiction to draw upon, and in these we find certain elements which are constantly recurring, and so we may safely conclude that these are projections of the writer himself. One of the things which impresses itself upon the reader is, what may be called the

mystical element. By this is meant the writer's realization of things unseen, and his conviction that it is these which really matter, and that union with God by prayer is the true work of earthly life. He has found in the Catholic Church's teaching the solution of his difficulties, and in the teaching of her great mystics the explanation of the mysteries of prayer—that wonderful power which can unlock as it were the very gates of heaven, and influence earthly destinies in a way unsuspected by the majority of men. As Tennyson so well expresses it :—

> More things are wrought by prayer
> Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
> Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
> For what are men better than sheep or goats,
> That nourish a blind life within the brain,
> If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
> Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
> For so the whole round earth is every way
> Bound by gold chains about the feet of God. [19]

And so, as we might expect, Hugh Benson's admiration for members of the contemplative orders is unbounded, for they draw from the very fountain-head of power, and their influence is diffused far and wide. By contemplatives he does not mean only those who withdraw from the world and devote their lives to prayer, but those also who, whilst living in the world, have passed through the lower degrees of prayer, and attained to the prayer of contemplation. Such we might call mystics, meaning by the word those who in prayer have attained to a certain conscious realization of the unseen—that conscious realization which comes to the soul which has reached the stage of contemplation.

As has been stated at the commencement of this pamphlet, there are some who claim that this state of soul is within the reach of all. The grace of contemplation according to this view is not something reserved for certain favoured souls, and denied to others, no matter how much they may strive after it. No soul can attain to this state without God's grace, but this grace is not denied to those who are sufficiently generous in the path of self-renunciation. The fact that contemplatives in the world are rare is because comparatively few are sufficiently generous in their efforts after perfection. But when the soul has reached this stage of prayer, and attained to contemplation, then it must have reached a state of detachment from earthly things and union with God which give it a wonderful power, and which is a source of ceaseless activities. These activities may manifest themselves in a life of prayer, if the soul has the vocation ; or they may manifest themselves in active exterior works and an untiring energy in carrying out God's work in whatever state of life the contemplative may be. To imagine that a mystic is a dreamy person who has no relations with this world, but who is ever wrapped apart in ecstasy, is to belie true mysticism, and to give it a reputation which it does not deserve. The truth is that the true mystic is very actively employed, for the source of his activities is found in prayer, and it would be easy to bring forward examples of the wonderful capacity for work possessed by men and women who have reached the higher degrees of prayer.

This seems to have been the case with Hugh Benson. There is scarcely a book of his which

does not touch on prayer, and in some we find attempts to describe in words the actual experiences of contemplation—in fact, we might almost call prayer and its influence the underlying *motif* of his books. We can trace it right through from the very first book which he wrote to the last. *The Light Invisible* was written before he became a Catholic, but one of the stories contained in it, "In the Convent Chapel," deals with this subject, and emphasizes the activity of a life of prayer; whilst in his very last book, *Loneliness*, which was not published till after he died, the heroine, after worldly disappointments, finds in prayer before the Tabernacle that "so far from being mere emptiness, all else seemed empty beside it."

One of his books, *Richard Raynal*, is devoted entirely to the history of a solitary, and though the book is purposely archaic in style, and so not very characteristic of the writer, one cannot help feeling that the man who wrote it must have had some experience in contemplative prayer, or at all events must have been extraordinarily interested in the subject. This impression is deepened as one reads others of the author's books: though the writer is professedly writing romances, there are many passages regarding prayer, and more than one attempt to describe the experience of contemplation. Take, for example, the following passage from *Lord of the World* [20]:—

"He began, as his custom was in mental prayer, by a deliberate act of self-exclusion from the world of sense. Under the image of sinking beneath a surface he forced himself downwards and inwards, till the peal of the organ, the shuffle of footsteps, the rigidity of the chair-back

beneath his wrists—all seemed apart and external, and he was left a single person with a beating heart, an intellect that suggested image after image, and emotions that were too languid to stir themselves. Then he made his second descent, renounced all that he possessed and was, and became conscious that even the body was left behind, and that his mind and heart, awed by the Presence in which they found themselves, clung close and obedient to the will, which was their lord and protector. He drew another long breath, or two, as he felt that Presence surge about him ; he repeated a few mechanical words and sank to that peace which follows the relinquishment of thought. There he rested for awhile. Far above him sounded the ecstatic music, the cry of trumpets and the shrilling of the flutes, but they were as insignificant street noises to one who was falling asleep. He was within the veil of things now, beyond the barriers of sense and reflection, in that secret place to which he had learnt the road by endless effort, in that strange region where realities are evident, where perceptions go to and fro with the swiftness of light, where the swaying will catches now this now that act, moulds it and speeds it ; where all things meet, where truth is handled and known and tasted, where God Immanent is one with God Transcendent, where the meaning of the external world is evident through its inner side, and the Church and its mysteries are seen from within a haze of glory."

I have transcribed this passage at length because I think it is characteristic of the writer. It would seem that the man who wrote this passage must have had some experience of what he is attempting to describe ; and this view is con-

firmed by other passages in the author's works. The processes of the spiritual life are evidently realities to him. Witness how in more than one of his books we come across a certain type of man —the man who has passed through the different stages of the spiritual life and attained apparently to the " Unitive " way. The author evidently looks upon these as ideal types,[21] fitted to be the guides and counsellors of others, whether they make contemplation the great object of their lives, or whether they are living in the world. Such, for example, are Mr. Rolls in *The Sentimentalists*, Christopher Dell in *The Conventionalists*, and Mr. Morpeth in *Initiation*—men who have been purified by trials and who have found in prayer the secret of peace of soul. Again in *The Dawn of All*, where he tries to depict the world from the standpoint of futurity, on the supposition that the Catholic Church grows powerful, the writer depicts Ireland as the contemplative Monastery of Europe, and at the same time as a great mental hospital. The contemplative becomes a physician competent to treat all cases of strain and mental breakdown, for he has the faculty of imparting in a certain degree to others the peace to which he himself has attained.

Other examples such as this might be quoted in which Hugh Benson speaks of prayer and of its influence. There is a story told in classical mythology of a man who unravelled the mystery of a certain labyrinth by means of a golden thread. Hugh Benson found in prayer the key to unlock the mysteries of God's world, and one sees it like a golden thread running through his different works and linking them together. He even tries to express in popular terms the intri-

cacies of the spiritual life, with its three broad divisions of purgative, illuminative, and unitive ways, and he chooses as the subject of such experiences, not, as one might expect, a member of a contemplative order, but a man who is tramping the roads,[22] as though to show that in his opinion these experiences are within the reach of all who are sufficiently generous, and who correspond faithfully with grace. Those who are interested will be able to read a more devotional treatment of the same subject in his *The Friendship of Christ*.[23]

I have heard it said, I know not upon what authority, that Hugh Benson felt strongly drawn to the Carthusians, and would willingly have exchanged the cassock and the active life for the Carthusian habit and the life of contemplation. It may be true, but there is many a man to whom the Carthusian life appeals, and who, nevertheless, has not the necessary vocation. There is, for example, the well-known instance of Blessed Thomas More, and any Carthusian monastery could tell a tale regarding those who come, but do not stay ; for as a Carthusian writer observes : " There are vocations which come from God, and others which come from the imagination." [24] Be that as it may, Hugh Benson never even tried his vocation, and one cannot help thinking that his peculiar talents displayed themselves to best advantage in the active life. But that he had leanings towards the contemplative life is evident from his writings.

He was passionately convinced of the truth of the Catholic Church's claims, and under her influence his fine talents were developed as the sun expands the petals of a flower and exposes its

beauty to the eye. He had never shown any great promise before he became a Catholic, and although he was over thirty when received into the Church, he had only made one incursion into the domain of literature. His book *The Light Invisible*, written when he was an Anglican, has merits from the literary point of view, but the tales fail to grip the reader as his later works do. This is particularly noticeable if one compares it with *A Mirror of Shalott*, in which tales of the same character are handled with far greater certainty and power. Indeed, the Catholic Church seems to have fully satisfied his aspirations and he discovered in her the ideal which he had been seeking. In the light which her teaching shed across his life, his dormant powers awoke, and he was able to express himself in a way that had never been possible to him before. His whole-hearted acceptance of her claims generated in him—to use an expression of his own—a certain fixity of devotion [25] that became the driving force in his life. It was his passionate conviction that she is the divinely appointed teacher of mankind, that she is the true guide in the union of the soul with God, and that in the teaching of her saints and mystics is contained the secret of those mysterious experiences of the soul in prayer, a certain measure of which had fallen to his lot, which produced in him the "fixity of devotion" that urged him to spend himself utterly in the Church's service, with such concentrated energy that his over-taxed constitution gave way beneath the strain, and he died when he had lived but little more than half man's normal span of mortal life.

Those who had the privilege of knowing him

personally speak of a certain charm of manner and conversation, and of an engaging simplicity. He could speak about his own doings with an entire absence of affectation, and was always ready to listen to criticisms of his writings. Surely this is a sign of true humility, for it must be remembered that he was a preacher with a brilliant reputation, a writer whose books had an immense circulation, and one who was much sought after as a spiritual guide. But none of these things spoilt his simplicity—nay rather, we have his brother's testimony [26] to the fact that his modesty seemed to increase with years.

Those who have heard Hugh Benson preach will not easily forget the impression. The boyish face with the shock of untidy-looking hair, the slight figure, and the somewhat awkward poise, did not augur well ; but when he had warmed to his work, he held his hearers almost spellbound, and this too in spite of defects of speech and manner ; for he had not a good speaking voice, and it sounded strained at times almost to breaking point. He made use of scarcely any gestures, and such as he employed might well have been dispensed with ; but as one listened to the flood of eloquence, and saw the slight form swaying hither and thither in its impassioned energy, one forgot all defects of utterance and delivery, and felt carried away by the intensity of the preacher's conviction. This, I take it, was the secret of his success as a preacher—his overwhelming earnestness. Here was a man who, in spite of certain obvious oratorical defects, said what he had to say with such a fire of passionate conviction, and with such concentrated energy of purpose, that one could not help listening to

his burning words. Hence it was that wherever he went his success as a preacher was remarkable, and it is said that sometimes he was engaged for as much as two years in advance.

Of his powers as a spiritual guide I cannot speak, from want of matter. One book [27] has appeared since his death on this subject, but it is not comprehensive enough to enable one to form an estimate. However, it conveys the impression that he himself was partly right when he said to his brother,[28] "I am not the man to *prop*; I can kindle sometimes, but not support." His gifts lay rather in other directions, and although no doubt he was capable as a spiritual guide, at all events to those whose natures he understood, yet his very impulsiveness, curbed as it was by grace, must have been somewhat opposed to the calmness and maturity of judgement and ripeness of experience demanded of one who is to be conspicuous as a guide to souls.

It would seem, then, that one of the lessons of Hugh Benson's life is the value of prayer. The spiritual world is the great world of realities, and it is by prayer that the soul comes in contact with these realities. The measure of the soul's union with God in prayer is the measure of the soul's whole-hearted devotion to God's service, and in the Catholic Church he found the ideal which he had been seeking. Here was the Bride of Christ, Christ's mystical Body, in whom he had been incorporated and in whose life he shared, so that his whole being became permeated by her spirit and his pulses beat with supernatural energy. In her he found a safe guide in the path of prayer—one who, with the experience of nineteen centuries behind her, could guide his soul to

an ever closer union with Almighty God, and so help him to interpret life's difficulties aright. It was because he realized this so intensely that he worked with such concentrated energy, and did so much work in so amazingly short a time.

In recognition of his services to the Catholic cause, the late Holy Father Pius X in 1911 made him one of his supernumerary private chamberlains, a dignity carrying with it the title of Monsignor, and it was under the title of Monsignor Benson that he was best known to the world at large. But no ecclesiastical dignities could enhance the reputation which his own sterling qualities had won for him. It was not because he could prefix Monsignor to his name that he became so well known and exercised so wide an influence, but because he was Hugh Benson, priest of the Catholic Church, who utilized to such good purpose the brilliant gifts with which God had endowed him.

CONCLUSION

And now this well-known figure has passed away and we shall see him no more, but he has left a gracious memory behind him, and the far reaching influence of a stimulating example. We cannot emulate his work, for we have not his gifts, but we can all do our best to imitate him, and to cultivate to the best such gifts as God has given us.

Hugh Benson was one to whom "five talents" had been committed, and who "gained other five." He cultivated the good gifts which God had given him and consecrated them entirely to His service. Fearless in his convictions, he embraced the Catholic religion as soon as he was

satisfied as to the Church's claims, and although the members of his family were very sympathetic in their treatment of him, it needed no small courage for the son of an Anglican Archbishop to abjure his father's faith. But the sacrifice was rewarded by a passionate conviction which called out all his powers, to be used in the Church's service with a whole-hearted devotion which has not often been surpassed.

It is but a few short years since he became a Catholic, went to Rome, was ordained a priest, and came back to England, and now he is gone for ever. But in that short span of life what wonderful activities were crowded! Whilst he was among us, we could scarcely open a Catholic paper without finding some traces of his busy life. He was preaching here, or lecturing there, or giving a retreat, or he was present at some public function, or at some social gathering. And then from time to time, at wonderfully short intervals, some book or other would appear, a silent tribute to his tireless pen. "How can he do it all? How does he find the time?" Such were the questions we asked ourselves as we were confronted by his bewildering activities. But now that he is dead, we know at what cost to himself that tremendous activity was kept up. He lived, to use his own phrase, "on the very edge of his capacities," and any one who has ever tried to do this can best understand what heroism such a life involved. He had wonderful gifts and he determined that they should not be wasted, but that they should be cultivated and wholly consecrated to His Master's glory. Therefore he did not spare himself, but gave of his very best in the Church's service, working until the pen fell from

his tired fingers, and his tireless energy was stilled by death.

And so he passes away from our midst, leaving behind him the record of great achievements. Like a meteor he flashed across the sky ; like a meteor he burnt himself out by the very rapidity of his motion, leaving behind him a trail of light. He has bequeathed to us the memory of a powerful preacher, of a brilliant writer, and of a skilled controversialist. But above all we like to think of him as a priest whose priesthood meant everything to him, and who was determined to tread as closely as he could in the footsteps of his Master. He realized intensely the part which suffering plays in a world which has been wrecked by sin, and the book in which he expresses himself upon this subject, *Initiation,* is, in the opinion of some, the very best he ever wrote. One of the reasons for his unbounded admiration of members of the contemplative orders is to be found in the fact that they expiate for sin. "Why, they're the princes of the world ! They are models of the Crucified. So long as there is sin in the world, so long must there be Penance. The instant Christianity was accepted, the Cross stood up dominant once more. . . And then people understood. Why, they're the Holy Ones of the universe—higher than angels ; for they suffer." [29]

Let those who would know something of his inner life turn to his book *The Friendship of Christ,* where they will find an illuminating description of the different phases of the spiritual life. They will learn how friendship with Christ is the very secret of the saints, how this process of friendship is evolved in the triple way of purga-

tion, illumination, and union, and how "the most sacred experiences of life are barren unless His friendship sanctifies them." [30] They will realize better that "the Church is the Body in which Christ dwells and energizes, that the Blessed Sacrament is Himself in the very human nature in which He lived on earth, and now triumphs in Heaven, that the sanctity of the saints is His own, that sacerdotal words and actions are the words and actions of the Eternal Priest, and that the supreme claim of sinners or other persons lies in the presence of Christ outraged and crucified or neglected within them." They will learn too that Christ in the Tabernacle meant to him the living Presence of a Friend, and this is a lesson which every Catholic can strive to lay to heart. Let us take farewell of him, then, before the Tabernacle, in the Presence of his Friend and ours, and close this all-imperfect sketch with a verse from one of his poems :—

> Nay! but with faith I sought my Lord last night,
> And found Him shining where the lamp was dim ;
> The shadowy altar glimmered height on height,
> A throne for Him :
> Seen as through lattice-work, His gracious Face
> Looked forth on me, and filled the dark with grace.

NOTES

1. This biography is in the competent hands of the Rev. C. C. Martindale, S.J.
2. *Mysticism*, by Rev. A. B. Sharpe, M.A. (C.T.S., 1d.), p. 3.
3. *Mystical Contemplation*, by E. Lamballe (Washbourne).
4. *Ibid.* p. 51.
5. *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Book I. ch. vii.
6. *Mystical Contemplation*, p. 90.
7. *The Love of God*, by St. Francis de Sales, Book VI. ch. iii.
8. *Ibid.* Book VII. ch. i.
9. *Mystical Contemplation*, p. 98.
10. *Ibid.* p. 100.
11. *Thesaurus Fidelium* (Longmans), p. vii.
12. *Confessions of a Convert* (Longmans), from which the quotations on pp. 7–10 are taken. See also *A City Set on a Hill* (C.T.S., 3d.).
13. Matt. xviii. 3.
14. *Hugh*, p. 153.
15. There is a description of this house in *Oddsfish!*
16. Eccles. ix. 10.
17. *Hugh*, p. 191.
18. *Ibid.* p. 169.
19. *Morte d'Arthur.*
20. Cf. also Fr. Girdlestone's tale in *A Mirror of Shalott.*
21. He calls them "mystics." See *The Conventionalists*, p. 126.
22. *None Other Gods*, Part ii. ch. vi.
23. Pp. 22–42.
24. *La Grande Chartreuse*, par un Chartreux, p. 306.
25. *None Other Gods*, p. 204.
26. *Hugh*, p. 229.
27. *Spiritual Letters of Monsignor Benson to one of his Converts.*
28. *Hugh*, p. 152.
29. *The Dawn of All*, p. 83.
30 *The Friendship of Christ*, p. 12.

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THE ORDER OF THE VISITATION

By CARDINAL GASQUET

[The Visitation Order was founded at Annecy on 6th June 1610. The following account was written on the occasion of the tercentenary of the Order, 6th June 1910, at the request of the Sisters of the Visitation Convent at Harrow-on-the-Hill, and through their kindness is made available for republication by the Catholic Truth Society. It is republished in its entirety except for a few passages which have been omitted in order to bring it within the compass of a penny pamphlet. The places where these omissions occur are indicated by dots.—ED.]

I.—Its Origin and Growth

IN the summer of 1610, three centuries ago, the Order of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary was founded in Savoy. It may be considered justly as the joint creation of two great saints, St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane Frances de Chantal, although, according to the depositions made by the latter during the process of canonization of the former, and many times repeated, the holy Bishop of Geneva alone was always regarded as the true founder by the first religious of the Order.

As might be expected, the work thus begun by these two heroic souls under God's inspiration was from the first blessed by Him in a remarkable way. Like the grain of mustard seed in the Gospel parable, which from being the least of all seeds grew to a tree in whose branches the birds of the air found shelter, the humble beginnings made in the

little house of La Galerie at Annecy, in Savoy, prospered and spread till its branches, now flourishing in all parts of the world, afford shelter to those who seek to serve God according to the wise and broad-minded legislation which so admirably reflects the spirit of the two saintly founders.

To understand the secret attraction which the houses of the Visitation Order exercise over the minds of those who have received God's call to serve Him according to this special form of religious life, it is necessary to know something of the origin of the Order, and to appreciate the supernatural principles which animated St. Francis de Sales and his spiritual daughter, St. Jane Frances, and which are reflected in it.

St. Jane Frances was born at Dijon in 1572. Her father was M. Bénigne Fremyot, a man of good family, who subsequently became the second President of the Parliament of his city of Dijon. At the age of twenty she married the young Baron de Chantal, an upright and religious man of the world, as well as a distinguished soldier. The few years of their married life were passed most happily as true Christians and devout Catholics. In fact, their household is described by one who knew it well as a model Christian family. One of the witnesses examined for the canonization of St. Jane Frances, declared that she and her husband showed at their home at Bourbilly "an example of the most saintly marriage it was possible to conceive." During the frequent absences of M. de Chantal, the entire management of the household and estates was placed by him in the hands of his young wife, and it was thus early in life she acquired

those business habits which subsequently proved so useful in the successful administration and direction of the Order which she was destined by God's providence to rule. In the regulations for the government of her household and of her husband's property, which she drew up in her early married life, we see reflected the true spirit of the "valiant woman" of the Holy Scripture, which subsequently St. Francis de Sales declared to be in so pre-eminent a manner the virtuous characteristic of his spiritual daughter.

Madame de Chantal's happy and saintly married life was of brief duration. Her husband, killed accidentally during a hunting excursion in 1601, left her after eight years of happy intercourse with the charge of the four children who survived out of the six with which the union was blessed. From this time the soul of the young widow sought consolation for her loss in more assiduous religious exercises, and she sustained herself by the thought that she might some day devote herself wholly to God in religion. Though the charge of her family was obviously her first care, from the date of her husband's death the possibility of her ultimately embracing some form of religious life seems to have been, in fact, present constantly to her mind; and although the fulfilment of her desire was to be delayed for some years, she was in reality preparing all the time, in the best possible way, for the call which God had destined to give her.

Meantime, whilst waiting for a definite indication of God's will in her regard, she devoted herself to the care and education of her young family. At the same time, convinced that it was her duty to

do so, she took upon herself the charge of her father-in-law's household under difficult and trying circumstances. All the business and constant worry entailed by these duties, which could hardly have failed to distract the souls of most people from the things of God, and to have proved a distinct hindrance to the cultivation of the supernatural ideals of the true Christian life, only tended to draw her soul nearer to God. Such duties performed in her spirit made her realize more truly her dependence on His fatherly providence, and enabled her to practise more perfectly those virtues of self-abnegation and devotion to others, which at this time and ever after, characterized her life. All this time of waiting, moreover, only served to convince her of her vocation to the supernatural life, and that the call would come in God's good time. This conviction constrained her to prepare herself for the future, as far as was possible, whilst in the world, by the exercise of the essential virtues of the cloistered life.

In 1603 Madame de Chantal took a step of great importance towards the fulfilment of her ardently desired wish to give herself to God. In the seventeenth century, many persons of all states and conditions in the world, widows, young men and maidens, and even married people, imitating the example of the Middle Ages, linked themselves to some religious Order as extern members. Though kept by duty or circumstances in the world, engaged in the care of a family or of a business, they yet in great numbers practised the penances and good works of the Franciscans or Dominicans, and in their third Orders they led, as far as was possible in their family circles, the lives of religious. Madame de

Chantal was specially attracted to the Order of St. Francis, and she was received into it on 6th April 1603.

In the following year the saintly widow came under the influence of one of the most sympathetic and clear-sighted directors the grace of God has ever produced for the good of those souls He has called to the higher paths. This was the gentle, the broad-minded and yet at the same time the strong and firm Bishop of Geneva, Saint Francis de Sales, who was already known as the spiritual adviser of many devout souls, and as a preacher who drew all hearts to himself and God. The authorities of Dijon invited the Bishop to preach the Lent in that city, and Madame de Chantal's father asked her to come to her native city to have the opportunity of following the spiritual conferences to be given by him. From the first the two Saints felt their souls attracted to one another, and St. Jane Frances in a very short time placed herself unreservedly in the hands of the Bishop, telling him of the desire she had long felt of renouncing the world and consecrating herself to God in religion. The more intimately the Saint as director came to know the soul of his penitent, the more was he struck with the work of grace manifested by her humility and modesty, and by her earnestness in all that regarded the spiritual life. At the same time the extraordinary measure of common sense which Madame de Chantal possessed and the strength of her character astonished him in no small degree, and gave him assured hope that she was called by God to do some great work for Him in the Church. "It is impossible," he said after knowing her for a short time, "to unite

together a greater breadth of mind with more profound humility. She is as simple and straight as a child, and possesses a judgement both solid and weighty—*solide et élevé*: her soul is truly great and she possesses the courage to undertake holy works beyond the powers of her sex." The Saint likewise frequently repeated the judgement he formed on first making her acquaintance: "I have found in Madame de Chantal at Dijon what Solomon could scarcely find in Jerusalem, a valiant woman."

Time went on thus for another three years, till, at the feast of Pentecost, 1607, Madame de Chantal found herself at Annecy, whither St. Francis de Sales had called her in order to satisfy her and himself as to her vocation to the religious life. After testing her obedience, the Bishop described to her the general lines of the Order of the Visitation, which in the lights he had gained in prayer he had conceived as the mode of life to which God called his saintly penitent. But it was still not for some time that the project of this new foundation which satisfied Madame de Chantal so well could be commenced. She was yet occupied in the charge of her young family and in other secular affairs from which she could not free herself. For some time also she was severely tried by her relations and friends, who urged her to make a second marriage, and left her no peace or consolation save in the fatherly and tender sympathy of St. Francis de Sales.

At length these difficulties began to resolve themselves, and the relations of Madame de Chantal came to see that continued opposition to the fulfilment of her desires was impolitic and unreasonable.

The marriage of one of her daughters, in 1609, was made the occasion of a final settlement. St. Francis de Sales was present to perform the ceremony, and in concert with others he ultimately persuaded the father of Madame de Chantal, M. Fremyot, to consent to her departure to some religious house. After some further delays caused by family troubles and sickness, the Saint finally left Dijon on 29th March 1610, and reached Annecy, where St. Francis of Sales was awaiting her, some days later.

The saintly Bishop had fixed upon the feast of Pentecost, 1610, as the most appropriate day for beginning the new Institute, but the house in which to begin, upon which he had counted, at the last moment was not to be procured, and a delay till Trinity Sunday became necessary. According to Madame de Chantal's depositions at the canonization of her saintly Confessor, the Bishop's first intention was to give to the Order he was founding the title and scope of a Congregation, but on this point he surrendered his judgement to that of the Archbishop of Lyons, Cardinal de Marquemont.[1] Moreover, speaking of the Order in another place, she says that St. Francis placed the Order under the special protection of Our Blessed Lady, "and named it after the sacred mystery of the Visitation, procuring for us the privilege of saying the Little Office of

[1] "He (St. Francis) had a great wish to restrict our Order to the simple title of a Congregation, and on this subject the illustrious Cardinal Bellarmin was of his opinion; but the late Archbishop of Lyons (Cardinal de Marquemont) urged him so strongly in the matter that our Blessed Founder consented, in deference to him, to place us under the rule of St. Augustine, writing to his Eminence in these words: 'I repress my desires, submitting to the decrees of God's providence. I am silent, and acquiesce in your judgement and counsel.'" —*From Depositions of St. Chantal.*

the Blessed Virgin only, a favour which has since been confirmed to us in perpetuity by our present Holy Father, Pope Urban VIII. The intention of our Blessed Founder in doing this was that there should be an Order in the Church of God specially consecrated and dedicated to sing day and night the praises of that Sovereign Queen, of whom he speaks so worthily and in such high terms in his books, and to whom he has even dedicated his *Treatise on the Love of God.*"

In his first conception of the Order, the Bishop had included the active works of visiting the sick, instructing children and others in their religion, and the like acts of Christian charity. It is said to have been as a record of this scope, which had subsequently to be partially abandoned, that the title of Visitation was given to the Order. There were, however, other reasons for the name, the main one being the devotion of the Bishop to the incident of the Visitation in our Lady's life. St. Jane Frances in her depositions declares that it was his purpose to revive "the devotion to the Blessed Virgin under the title of the Visitation, which devotion had, before the ravages of heresy, been practised in the mountain district of Voiron, about nine miles from Geneva."

In speaking of the beginnings of the Visitation Order, it is well to bear in mind the high ideals of religious life which the saintly Bishop had, and his ardent zeal for the souls of those who had been led to serve God in the cloister. St. Jane Frances, after his death, deposed that one day she heard him say: "If a person living in the world were to ask me what she must do in order to save her soul, I

should answer: *Keep the commandments of God and you will infallibly do so.* But to a Nun I should say: *By giving yourself absolutely and entirely to God.* The King of kings will have all or nothing, He will reign alone or not at all. It will not be God who will judge Monks and Nuns, but the Saints, who will say to them: 'We had the same flesh and bones as you have, and yet we walked along the road marked out for us by our Master.' He used also to say that it was better to be cold than lukewarm, because coldness was at least recognizable, but that the lukewarm were intolerable to our Divine Lord: that He would cast them away from Him."

These high ideals the Bishop set before those who were destined to begin the new Order of the Visitation at Annecy. On the 6th of June 1610, Madame de Chantal and her two companions, Mademoiselle Marie Jacqueline Favre and Mademoiselle Charlotte de Bréchard, after having received communion from the Bishop, spent the day in visiting the various churches of the city, and giving consolation to the sick poor. In the evening they took possession of the little house of La Galerie, which had been prepared for them, and on their knees listened to the reading of the rule of life which St. Francis de Sales had put into writing for their guidance. The Community consisted of the three above named, and an outsister named Anne-Jacqueline Coste.

The following days were partly occupied in consultation with the Bishop to determine the most convenient order of the day, the special manner of life, the best method of reading and singing, which the Saint desired should always be correctly and

reverently done in the church. It was upon 2nd July 1610, the feast of the Visitation itself, that at Vespers the little band of sisters sang their Office for the first time, St. Francis of Sales assisting at it on his knees, leaning upon the rail at the entry of the choir absorbed in prayer.

The trust of the young Community in God was early in its existence tried severely. About five weeks after the commencement of the young Institute, Mother de Chantal fell so seriously ill of a fever that her life was in grave peril. It was under these circumstances that St. Francis de Sales gave the sorrowing sisters a lesson in the trust they should always have in God's Providence. He said to Mother de Chantal in the presence of the sisters, who all knew how he had set his heart upon the foundation: "Perhaps God intends to be satisfied with our attempt and with the goodwill with which we set to work to prepare this little society for Him, just as He was satisfied with the readiness which Abraham showed to sacrifice his son. If then it is His good pleasure that, having reached the middle of our journey, we should turn back, His will be done." And this, says St. Jane Frances in relating the incident, "was a heroic act of resignation on account of the great benefits which he expected that souls would derive from this manner of life."

The trial, however, was not to be made in all its fulness, and Mother de Chantal quickly recovered and resumed the charge of her small Community. By the end of the first year five more devout souls had united themselves to the three original members, and at the end of the second year there were ten in the Community. St. Francis de Sales devoted much

of his attention to the training of the nuns of the new Institute, and it is in his *Conferences* that we must look for the spirit of the new Order. Most of the sisters had come from families of worldly distinction and had no other desire, on embracing the religious life in the Visitation Convent of Annecy, than in obscurity, poverty, and self-sacrifice to draw nearer to God, and thus to remove all that interfered with full intercourse with Him and the supernatural world round about them, which is the true object of all religious life. To these souls, athirst for spiritual teaching, St. Francis gave these familiar *Spiritual Conferences* at the beginning of the Institute, during rather more than two years, from June 1610 to October 1612. These precious *Spiritual Conferences* have been thus described: "Providence had given them (the sisters) in the person of St. Francis de Sales a master capable of developing such high aspirations. They all venerated him as an Angel of God, and had no less confidence in his devotion than faith in his wisdom. All were humble enough to demand from their teacher the imparting of the most elementary knowledge concerning the spiritual life, and enlightened enough to receive with delight and full appreciation the most sublime instructions. On his part, our Saint appeared in the midst of them less like a legislator imposing laws, than like a father teaching his little ones to walk. There was therefore on both sides a close intimacy: a child-like freedom which yet lacked nothing in respect and reverence, a fatherly tenderness which yet was never wanting in firmness. The holy Founder, we may venture to say, literally fulfilled the functions of Master of Novices."

The constant guiding hand of the saintly Bishop was necessary during the early years of the Institute, since his letters show us that whilst recognizing the need of some such asylum for souls seeking God, he had not made up his mind exactly what should be the special end and object of the Order of the Visitation. The only point that was from the first clear was that there were many pious and generous souls able to make the most heroic sacrifices for God, who by reason of delicate health or constitutional weakness were yet prevented from entering the more severe Orders, like the Carmelites, Poor Clares, Dominicans or Ursulines. Though in every other way fitted for the life of the cloister, such souls were forced on account of the weak state of their health to remain in the worldly state which they disliked. It was to meet such cases that St. Francis first thought of the possibility of establishing a new Order where the austerities of the religious life, as usually practised at that time, might be mitigated for such as otherwise would not be able to have the help of the cloistered life to lead them along the path of perfection. "I hope," writes the Bishop in one letter, "that this Congregation will be a pleasant and fitting refuge for those who are not strong; for without much corporal austerity, they practise all the essential virtues of the devout life. They say the Office of our Lady and make their mental prayer. They work, keep silence, practise obedience, humility, and have nothing of their own. Quite as much as in any monastery in this world, their life is a life of love of God, an interior life full of peace and mutual edification."

The Saint then goes on to point out that in

the first instance he had wished the sisters to be occupied in active works of charity towards the sick. Most of the nuns at the beginning of the seventeenth century had taken refuge from the world behind high walls and impenetrable grilles, where they occupied themselves in prayer and in the sanctification of their own souls. They never went out of their cloister to visit the sick, to console the dying, or to perform other works of Christian charity to others. St. Francis de Sales saw at the moment when first the idea of the Visitation Order came to him that there was great need for some body of devout women who might unite to their own life of prayer the useful, necessary, and specially blessed service of others in the various works of charity. So, as he writes: "After their profession the sisters go out to wait upon the sick, which they do, by God's help, in great humility."

With regard to the enclosure, this is what he determined as sufficient to begin with: "No man is allowed to enter into the living parts of the house except for such matters for which they may go into all the strict monasteries. Women also may not enter the enclosure without leave of the Superior, by whom I mean the Bishop or his substitute. As for the sisters, after their year's noviciate they go out, but only to serve the sick."

The active side of the Order of the Visitation, the memory of which is preserved in the name given to it, was subsequently given up, as other religious Orders, and notably the Sisters of Charity founded by St. Vincent de Paul, met this hitherto pressing need. St. Vincent de Paul, on the death of St. Francis, became the confessor of St. Chantal, and

it is very possible, and indeed probable, that he derived the idea of the mission and scope of the Sisters of Charity which he founded by learning from his penitent the original idea of St. Francis.

One matter upon which St. Francis de Sales insisted very strongly as necessary, especially in a Community in which corporal austerities were purposely much mitigated, was the necessity of self-sacrifice and the constant and thoughtful service of others. Early in his direction of Madame de Chantal the Bishop had given her his advice on this matter: telling her that her love and devotion to God, which prompted her to rise very early in the morning, should also tell her not to make her maid suffer by having to rise even earlier to attend to her. So in the convents of the Visitation the Saint insisted upon the sisters being united by mutual love as well as by their vows. His common sense rejected the notion that it was right for religious to cultivate the supernatural virtues to the detriment of the natural. This is why in his *Spiritual Conferences* he insists again and again upon such ordinary Christian virtues as cordiality, generosity, simplicity, and the rest. In one of these Conferences he says: "I have always considered that (the peculiar spirit of the Visitation) is a spirit of profound humility towards God, and of great gentleness with our neighbour, the more so because, treating the body with less severity, it must all the more foster kindliness of heart. All the ancient Fathers agree that where rigour of corporal mortification is wanting, there ought to be more perfection of mind; therefore humility towards God and gentleness towards your neighbour must in your

houses take the place of the austerity of others. . . . The spirit of gentleness is so absolutely the spirit of the Visitation, that anyone who should wish to introduce into it any more austerities than there are at present would instantly destroy the Visitation. This would the more certainly be the case, since it would be done in opposition to the very end and object for which the Order was instituted—namely, to be able to receive delicate women, maidens and widows, whose physical powers are not great enough, and who are not inspired and drawn to serve God and to unite themselves to Him, by means of such austerities as are practised by other Religious Orders."

From this and similar passages which might be cited, the object the holy Bishop of Geneva had in founding the Visitation Order is clear; and no less clear was the spirit which he desired to instil into the devout souls who, under him and St. Jane Frances de Chantal, were the first to give themselves to God in the Congregation. The essential object of all religious life is, of course, the same in all Orders—namely, the union of the soul with God. The means by which this object is attained, however, differs very considerably, although the practice of prayer must, of course, ever remain the chief path by which the individual soul must seek to unite itself to the Heavenly Spouse it has chosen on entering into religion. No one realized this great fact more certainly than did St. Francis of Sales and St. Jane Frances de Chantal, and every provision was made by the external aids furnished by the established constitutions to assist the sisters to mount the ladder of perfection and to attain

to that union with God in prayer which is within the power of every professed religious. The main obstacles which retard the spiritual journey were removed by the vows of religion; and in place of great corporal austerities, which would have defeated the main object of St. Francis, which was to give the possibility of the true religious life to the aged and infirm, he substituted the constant mortification of self in serving and assisting others, and insisted that all who desired to have the true spirit of the Visitation Order must strive to manifest the possession of every natural virtue and grace, especially those which had to be exercised in relation to others.

The Order thus begun by the two saintly founders in 1610 quickly gained esteem, and by the Providence of Almighty God a second convent was erected in 1615 at Lyons. At the present day it counts 175 convents, of which 143 are in Europe. France, the country of its birth, still has the greater number of these Visitation Convents, 69 in all, although six or seven have been closed and the sisters exiled for the crime of being religious engaged in teaching. As to this, the Rule allows the nuns, although enclosed, to educate young ladies, and a great number of houses have availed themselves of this permission. In the United States the Visitation establishments number 21, in Mexico there are four, and in South America seven, and most of these have large and flourishing schools.

The Order of the Visitation has no Mother General, each house being separately governed by its own Superior under the jurisdiction of the diocesan Bishop. Although each house thus forms a distinct family, the houses of the Institute keep

in touch with one another by yearly communications in the form of letters sent round to each house. The Convent of Annecy, as the birthplace of the Order, and according to the wish of the Founders, although possessing no jurisdiction, is always regarded as the centre with which all the branches should be united. To it they have recourse in any difficulty concerning the observance of the Rules.

II.—The Order in England

Having thus briefly described the foundation of the Order, and pointed out some chief characteristics of its spirit, we may now turn to review the connection which the Order has with England. Established as the Order was after this country had fallen away from the Faith, it was hardly to be expected that during the days of persecution any branch of it would have been transplanted thither. Still, even in the dark days for Catholicism of the seventeenth century, there was serious talk of erecting a convent of the Visitation in this country. The project came to nothing; but the mere fact of the intention is of interest, and the idea was conceived under the following circumstances. The great modern devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus took its origin, as all know, in the Visitation Convent of Paray-le-Monial, where our Blessed Lord, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, made choice of a nun, Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque, to reveal His pleasure in regard to this form of worship, and to make known His desire that she should propagate it throughout the world. The director of this holy soul was the celebrated Jesuit Father, Claude de la Colombière. Now in the reign of King Charles II., between 1675

and 1681, Father de la Colombière came over to England, some say as chaplain to Mary of Modena, the wife of the Duke of York, subsequently James II., and during his stay he preached in the Chapel Royal at St. James's about the new devotion, and urged it upon his hearers.

At the same time there was a serious talk of establishing a house of the same Visitation Order in France, specially intended for English ladies who desired to embrace the mode of life, but who could not do so in their own country because of the penal laws. Writing to the Superior of the convent at Paray-le-Monial, Father de la Colombière says: "On travaille toujours pour fonder un couvent d'Anglaises sous votre règle, ce sera à la Boulogne en Picardie." An English version of the Constitutions of the Visitation Order, which was printed in Paris in 1678, seems also to point to the fact that the idea was really taking a practical form, when the serious consequences to Catholics of Titus Oates' plot, which took place that same year, would seem to have put an end to the project. From another letter it would likewise appear that it was Mary of Modena herself who had intended to found this English convent of the Visitation at Boulogne, just as during her exile from England Queen Henrietta Maria had founded that of Chaillot, near Paris. Though nothing came of the scheme for an English house, Queen Mary of Modena continued to have intimate relations with the Order; and in 1701, on the death of her husband, James II., she retired to the convent at Chaillot—the house founded by the Queen of Charles I.—and died there in 1718.

Half a century later, in 1776, the project of an

English house of the Visitation was renewed by Lady Stourton, the widow of the fourteenth Lord, well known for her unbounded charities to poor Catholics in the eighteenth century. Hearing that Mary Weld, only daughter of the Squire of Lulworth Castle, intended to become a religious, she proposed that they should join together in founding a house of "the daughters of St. Francis." Mary Weld, however, after carefully weighing the matter before God, was attracted ultimately to the Franciscans, in a convent of which Order at Bruges she had been educated, and she joined the English house of Poor Clares at "Aire in Artois." This community was dispersed at the time of the French Revolution, and Miss Weld, in religion Mother Euphrasia, died at Clare House, Plymouth, on 12th March 1823, having lived to see the nuns of the Visitation well established in England.

Twenty years or so after the failure of Lady Stourton's project, Almighty God inspired a Mrs. Tunstall with the desire of assisting to make the first English foundation of the Order. Catherine Tunstall was the eldest daughter of George Markham, Esq., of Clenby, Lincolnshire, and of his wife Mary Salvin, of Croxdale, "both persons of great virtue and firmly established in our holy faith, notwithstanding the severity of the penal laws." She was married to Cuthbert Tunstall, of Wycliffe in Yorkshire, and he, dying in 1790, left her with ample means. She had no family, but as the annals of the English nuns of the Visitation say, God "destined (her) to be the mother of many spiritual daughters." She had a great love for the Sacred Heart, a devotion peculiarly connected with the

Visitation Order through Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque, the instrument chosen by God to propagate it in His Church. She was also attracted to St. Francis of Sales, and had long been specially earnest in placing herself under his protection. Desiring, therefore, when left alone in the world by the death of her husband, to do something for the glory of God, she was inspired to set aside a considerable sum of money towards the establishment of a house of the Visitation Order in England.

To carry out her intention, it was first necessary for Mrs. Tunstall to secure the co-operation of other ladies of family and fortune. Just at this time she heard that Juliana, the eldest daughter of Mr. Thomas Weld, of Lulworth, the niece of the above-named Mother Mary Euphrasia, had expressed her wish to become a religious, and that her sister Mary was already inclined to the same state of life. Mrs. Tunstall approached the elder of these young ladies through her cousin Lady Arundell of Wardour. Miss Weld was already a fervent client of St. Francis de Sales, and at first, after having studied the Constitutions of the Order of the Visitation, she certainly felt drawn to that special method of life. After much prayer and thought, however, she determined to return to the Franciscan Convent at Bruges, where she had been educated, and to seek admission into the Order of the other St. Francis. The community at Bruges had to leave the country on account of the Revolution some short time after her entry, and Miss Weld was professed in their new home at Abbey House, Winchester, taking the name of Sister Francis de Sales.

Before leaving home, Miss Weld had told her

sister Mary Teresa of the projected foundation of the English house of the Visitation. Lady Arundell, too, spoke about it and encouraged her to regard it as God's vocation; and having "waited," as the annals record, "eleven years with surprising constancy and perseverance," Mr. Weld's second daughter, Mary Teresa, "became the foundation stone of the holy work." She did not, however, remain in England for any length of time after the departure of her elder sister to Bruges, but went with her father and family in 1792 to Liège, where her brothers were in the Jesuit College.

Meanwhile Mrs. Tunstall, anxious to procure a sister of the Order of the Visitation who might form the nucleus of the proposed English community, opened a correspondence with the Superior of the second convent of the Order at Rouen, which was understood to have the best reputation for its observance. Just at this time, and before anything could be arranged, the great storm of the French Revolution burst over the country. On 19th November 1790, the religious of both convents were forbidden, in the name of "liberty," to renew their religious vows; and then, as they unanimously declared that "they preferred death to the smallest infraction of their sacred obligations," they were imprisoned in one of their houses. Four hundred and thirty nuns and two hundred other ladies were detained in this way for nine months, and would have paid the penalty of their devotion on the guillotine had not the death of Robespierre, on 28th July 1794, put a stop to the wholesale massacre of religious throughout France, which was to have taken place that very day. After this time more

liberty was allowed to the sisters, and three of them, despairing of ever again seeing their religious observances in the old home at Rouen, found means to get to Lisbon, where they were welcomed at the convent of the Visitation in that city. As these three sisters were destined by God's Providence to become the foundation stones of the English branch of the Visitation Order, their names should be known. They were: Louise Thérèse Grandin de Mansigny, who belonged to the first convent of the Order at Rouen; Thérèse de Chantal Hurard and Madeleine Angélique Heugue, both being nuns of the second convent in that place. In the house at Lisbon, newly founded from the centre of the Order at Annecy, and in its first fervour, these three nuns passed six years, until indeed Providence brought them into relation with Mrs. Tunstall, the English lady who had been for some time hoping and working to establish the Order in England.

Mrs. Tunstall had seen the Rouen Communities of the Visitation, from which she had hoped to make her foundation, dispersed by the French Revolution of 1798. This seemed to put an end to her cherished project, and she had applied the money she had put aside for the establishment of the English convent to relieving the exiled French clergy who had sought refuge in England from the persecution of the revolutionary party. But chance, or rather Providence, gave her new hopes of being able to carry out her original plan. One day, late in the year 1802, Father Charles Forrester, S.J., Mrs. Tunstall's director, was travelling by coach from London to Wardour Castle. In the carriage was a French lady whom, in conversation, he found

to be a certain Madame de Mansigny, sister-in-law of the Sister Louise who, belonging to the first convent of the Visitation at Rouen, had sought refuge, as already pointed out, in the house at Lisbon in 1797, with two sisters of the second convent. Madame de Mansigny told Father Forrester that she thought it quite possible that these three sisters would have no objection to help in founding a new convent in England. Mrs. Tunstall was informed of this, and Madame de Mansigny was asked to sound her sister-in-law as to her willingness to enter into the long-cherished plan.

At once Sister de Mansigny and the other two religious from Rouen accepted the suggestion with pleasure, as it seemed to be a providential means for re-uniting the scattered Communities in a convent where religious life should be possible. Sister Magdalen Heugue consequently wrote saying: "We shall not be wanting in anything, either spiritually or temporally: we shall wear our holy habit in the house, if not on the journey. . . ."

Arrived at Falmouth, they were obliged by the authorities to wait till 29th January for permission to enter the country, and they then set out to visit the convent of Spetisbury, near Blandford, the new home of the English Canonesses of Louvain, who had settled there in 1799, with whom Mrs. Tunstall was then staying. Sister Thérèse de Chantal, speaking of their arrival, writes: "She (Mrs. Tunstall) came to meet us, and, respectfully kissing our hands, expressed her gratitude for all we had done in order to second her pious projects." She gave each of the nuns copies of their *Constitutions*, which had been translated the previous year, to be ready for

the new English foundation, by Father Forrester, S. J. The three daughters of St. Francis de Sales remained for six weeks at Spetisbury to rest after all their journeyings with their Augustinian sisters. Meanwhile a home was being prepared for them at Acton, near London, and this they took possession of on 16th March 1804.

The actual foundation of this, the first English house of the Order of the Visitation, is placed, however, on the feast of St. Joseph, 19th of March, because on that day the Bishop of the London district, Dr. Douglass, came to Acton to welcome them, and to determine the limits of the enclosure. The little property, called "Acton House," was situated close to the Protestant church, and it is said to have been the residence of Lady Derwentwater at the time of her husband's execution on 24th February 1719. The first thing that Bishop Douglass was required to do was to accept the resignation of Mother Louise Thérèse de Mansigny, who, as before noted, had been appointed at Lisbon Superior. What had been thought possible on her appointment had taken place. The hardships endured during the journey, and the "effect of living in an heretical country," had completely unbalanced her mind, and her resignation was necessary. She soon after retired to her own convent at Rouen. In her place Mother Hurard was elected by the other two sisters, and the election was confirmed by Bishop Douglass.

Many ladies now felt attracted to the "sweet reasonableness" of the life of these daughters of St. Francis. Mrs. Tunstall herself entered the convent at Acton as a postulant, but quickly found

out, to her great grief, that she was not fitted for life in a community. The first English novice was a Miss Garnham, a native of Wisbeach, and on 6th May 1805 she pronounced her vows. On 13th December in the same year the sisters received Miss Mary Weld, to whom reference has before been made, and about whom something more must be said.

Mary Weld, the second daughter of Thomas Weld, of Lulworth, had heard much about the nuns of the Visitation from her elder sister, who, as before related, had at one time thought of joining them, but who had subsequently recognized that God called her elsewhere, and had taken her vows in the Franciscan community of Bruges. Mary had been educated partly at the old Bar Convent at York and partly by the English Franciscan nuns then at Bruges, but who are now happily settled at Taunton. After her sister had entered the convent abroad, Mr. and Mrs. Weld took their younger daughter on to the Continent, where they remained until the French Revolution, making itself felt, caused them to return in the early part of 1793 to Lulworth Castle. Miss Weld, at the time of their return, was eighteen years of age, and she is described as being "brilliant and beautiful," and "likely to attain everything this world can give." She, however, had very distinctly heard God's call to the religious life, and from what she had learnt about the Order of the Visitation from her elder sister, and from conversations with Mrs. Tunstall and Lady Arundell, she had set her heart upon joining the daughters of St. Francis de Sales. . . .

By the advice of her spiritual director, Père Grou,

S.J., Mary Weld made a formal offering of herself to God on the feast of the Purification, 1795. Ten years, however, were destined to pass by before she was able to take her religious vows in the Order to which God's voice called her so clearly. For many years her father was reluctant to allow her to leave home, but finally she obtained his consent under curious circumstances, which have indeed often been related, but which may fitly find a place in this brief account of the establishment of the Order in England.

King George III., with Queen Charlotte and some other members of the Royal Family, sometimes visited Lulworth Castle. On one occasion Mr. and Mrs. Weld received the King and Queen at the chief entrance, surrounded with their children, all singing the National Anthem. The old King was greatly touched by this, and taking Mr. Weld aside, asked him: "Are all your children good? Are there none that give you trouble?" "No, sire," was the reply; and the King with a sigh said, "Ah, then how happy you must be!"

In the end it was through this friendship of King George III. with her father that Mary Weld obtained his consent to take the step she had long sighed for. The way this came about may be told in the words of the annals: "It happened towards the end of the year 1804 that Mr. and Mrs. Weld were invited to meet King George III. at a house in the neighbourhood of Lulworth. During his former visits to the castle the aged King had been particularly pleased with Mr. Weld's family, and he was quite unable to comprehend how a beautiful girl like Miss Weld, to whom the world offered so many attractions, could renounce every-

thing to become a nun. As soon as he arrived at this gentleman's house he enquired for his daughter Mary, and Mr. Weld had to order his carriage and go in great haste to fetch his daughter, who had remained at Lulworth. On their way she said to her father that she felt uncomfortable at the thought that the King would be certain to ask her when she was going to the convent; and 'you know,' she said, 'I do not know what to answer him.' The father . . . touched by the same grace which raised her above the world, assured her that he would no longer oppose her retirement from the world, which he saw had no charms for her."

In this way it came to pass that, accompanied by her father, Mary Weld arrived at Acton on 13th December 1804. She was no stranger to the small band of sisters gathered together in this their first house, for she had visited the three French nuns on their first arrival at Spetisbury, and had called at Acton the previous year. Still she had to face many difficulties and interior trials, and it required much confidence in God for her to believe that the small beginnings in a tiny house, where the two old French nuns and a few novices formed the Community, could be destined to grow into a flourishing convent. She, however, was accustomed to place all her trust in God, and so she received the religious habit on 29th January 1805, taking the name of Sister Mary Sales. The following year she was professed, and on 7th June 1810 was elected the Superior of the Community, which in these few first years had greatly increased.

It was soon obvious that the house at Acton was altogether too small for the needs of the Community,

and shortly before the election of Sister Mary de Sales as Superior, various friends of the nuns had been looking out for a more suitable home for them. Lady Arundell recommended a house at Shepton Mallet, in Somerset, as suitable for a convent, and it was decided to move thither. The house at Acton was taken back by Mr. Selby, who had sold it to them, for the price they had given for it, and Mr. Thomas Weld arranged all the details of the new purchase at Shepton, and saw to the alterations of the house, to which they removed on 21st and 22nd August 1810. . . .

In 1814 the Visitation nuns opened a free school at Shepton for the children of the poor, which at that time was the only one in the town. It was managed at first by a Sister Mary Lucy Hart, who had been born in the neighbourhood of Shepton, and who was the second sister to become professed in the convent after its establishment there. Between 1805 and 1831 thirty-three religious in all, many of them of well-known English Catholic families, were received into the Order. In 1812 Mother Mary Sales Weld received her youngest sister Clare as a postulant. She was brought to Shepton by her brother, Mr. Thomas Weld, of Lulworth, who afterwards became a priest, and is known in Catholic history as Cardinal Weld. Eleven years later Mr. Weld brought to the convent his niece, Fanny Vaughan, who was professed as Sister Frances Angela.

In 1814 the lay-foundress of the convent, Mrs. Tunstall, came to end her last days with the sisters and be cared for by them. She was then advanced in years, in a very feeble state, and had lost the use

of her eyes. She continued her charities, however, to the end, dividing her income into three parts, one to be spent on the Church, one upon the poor, and the other for her own needs and private charities. She had a great devotion to the Poor Souls in Purgatory, and she never heard of the death of any friends without having a mass said for them. When she came to die herself it was discovered that, although she had founded many perpetual masses for the souls of the faithful departed, she had made no provision for herself, trusting, no doubt, that as she had ever remembered to have prayers and masses offered for others, her friends would do the same by her. Mrs. Tunstall, a Christian and a valiant woman, died 28th October 1825. She was buried in the centre of the sisters' own cemetery.

The name of Mrs. Tunstall, the lay-foundress of the Visitation Order in England, recalls the memory of the two religious who first established the convent at Acton. Sister Magdalen Angela Heugue died 11th February 1812, and the other, Sister Thérèse de Chantal Hurard, seeing that the English house was well established, returned to France in 1816.

In one way especially the Community proved themselves true daughters of the Visitation Order. Soon after the arrival of the sisters at Shepton Mallet they determined to establish there a centre of devotion to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, which, as before noted, had commenced at their convent at Paray-le-Monial through God's inspiration to their sister in religion, Blessed Margaret Mary. The Society or Confraternity of this devotion was formally inaugurated in their convent

chapel on 16th August 1816. At this time also the sisters obtained permission from Rome to have the votive mass of the Sacred Heart on the first Friday of every month and on the Friday following the octave of Corpus Christi. In this way the nuns of the Visitation at Shepton were really the first to propagate in England the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which has since spread in so marvellous a way throughout the world.

The register containing the names of the Confraternity from 16th August 1816 to 20th June 1847 is still at Shepton Mallet, and the first name is that of Dr. Coombes, the Chaplain of the Convent, then follow those of the sisters in their order, and entered in their own handwriting. Other communities are enrolled *en bloc*, and many well-known Catholic names appear in the pages of the volume, such as Stourton, Clifford, Bodenham, Berington, Tunstall, Gillow, Weld. The names of many of the Benedictine monks, first established at Downside, a few miles away on the Mendip Hills, appear in 1818.

After the year 1825 the continual recurrence of the floods seemed to call for the removal of the Community to some more healthy quarters. The damp state of the house undermined the constitution of many of the sisters, and the reports spread about of the condition of things, making it even worse than the reality, had deterred some at the last from joining them. There were no novices forthcoming, and it began to be said that to join the Community at Shepton Mallet "was to seek an early grave." Mother Mary Sales Weld, who was elected Superior for the third time in 1828, was convinced of the

necessity for removing the convent. The fact, however, that the sisters had spent so large a sum of money on their house was a grave objection, and moreover the Bishop, Dr. Baines, did not encourage the idea.

Another serious flood in 1829, and the refusal of the town authorities to turn the stream, finally determined Mother Mary Sales to look out for another home for her nuns. The friends and relations of the nuns urged a speedy removal, and a suitable house, with twenty-six acres of land, was found at Westbury-on-Trym, near Bristol. The bodies of twelve nuns who had died at Shepton, together with the remains of Mrs Tunstall, were removed from the little convent cemetery and placed in the vault under the chapel. This was the last act of the Community at Shepton, and on 17th May 1831 the first detachment of nuns took possession of their new home at Westbury. During the removal the choir office was continued at Shepton until there were sufficient numbers at the new convent to carry on the perpetual round of prayer and praise which is so essential a feature in their life. The building of the chapel and cloister was not completed until 1834, and they were blessed by Bishop Baines on 8th December of that year.

The house thus happily settled at Westbury continued there amid the difficulties and consolations which are the lot of every observant community till 1896. In 1846 Mother Mary Sales was released from the office of Superior for the last time, but lived for another twenty years, dying only in 1866. She was succeeded by Mother Frances Angela Vaughan, her niece.

In 1896, at the earnest request of Cardinal Vaughan, it was determined to move the convent once more to some place near London, and in the June of that year the property at Sudbury Grove, at Harrow-on-the-Hill, was purchased. Here a large portion of their convent and a convent chapel has already been built, and God has blessed them visibly by an increase of members, whilst He has not neglected to manifest His love by sending them some trials.

It may be useful to add that besides the convent of the Visitation at Harrow, which is really the only English house of the Order, there is a convent of sisters, exiles from Germany, settled at Walmer. They came over in 1875, and were received and housed by their sisters at Westbury whilst negotiations were being carried on for their settlement in England. They have succeeded well, have a flourishing boarding school, and they have done much to spread the devotion to the Sacred Heart in this country. They have in England the charge of the Archconfraternity of the Guard of Honour of the Sacred Heart.

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THE PROTESTANT PLATFORM

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE following twenty examples give us a view of the Protestant platform under what is perhaps the most widely advertised and vaunted of its aspects—the recruits from Rome. Here are a score of men and women who have either made public use of their apostasy or else have laid false claim to the notoriety of apostates. The collection is a mixed one in several respects: what links these people together into an unenviable unity is the common purpose they have achieved in attacking the Catholic Church on the ground of personal experience. How far such attacks are worthy of credence by sensible folk is best estimated by considering the careers and characters of the majority of these lecturers. It would be unjust, of course, to measure the best among them by standards applicable only to the worst. What the reader must do, in order to be quite fair, is to let the graver offenders draw whatever mitigating leaven can be supplied by the others, and then strike an average. That average will supply the moral quality of the "ex-Romanist" as Protestant lecturer—and what an average it is!

G. E. A.

THE PROTESTANT PLATFORM

By G. Elliot Anstruther,
Organizing Secretary, C.T.S.

Giovanni Achilli

Mention of Achilli's name takes us back to the year 1850, a year in which Protestant prejudice throughout England was excited by the "No Popery" agitation which followed the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy. In May of that year a meeting of the Evangelical Alliance, at Birmingham, was addressed by one Dr. Achilli, minister of an Italian Protestant church in London, an apostate who had been a friar at Viterbo. His moral character was thoroughly bad; he had been a profligate, deprived of his lectureship for grave misconduct and suspended from all priestly offices, and he was described by the Neapolitan police as "known for habitual incontinency." Achilli's immoralities were alluded to by Dr. Newman in a lecture to the Brothers of the Little Oratory at Birmingham, in October 1851, and as a result the ex-priest brought an action for libel against the future Cardinal, which was heard in the Queen's Bench in the following year. The evidence as to Achilli's character was such that it would be conclusive to any modern jury; but those were the days of strong anti-Catholic bias, with which even the judge (Lord Campbell) showed

himself to be affected, and a verdict was returned against Newman. The *Times*, in a strong leading article, protested against this miscarriage of justice, and the *Morning Chronicle* took Lord Campbell severely to task. On appeal the verdict was quashed, and offerings from every part of the country flowed in to defray the costs on the Catholic side. Newman's exposure of Achilli was timely and thorough, and resulted in discrediting the latter with all respectable Protestants.

Brother Ansgar

Among the accessions to the Protestant lecture platform within the past few years is a native of Denmark named Ericksen, an apostate who was for a time a member of the community of Marist Brothers at Dumfries. Needless to say, he was taken up by the Protestant Alliance after his "conversion," and addressed meetings under the auspices of that body. His lectures included the customary charges—drunkenness, cruelty, etc.—which Catholics have by now grown accustomed to from lecturers of this stamp; and he continued, as a Protestant lecturer, to wear an imitation of the Marist habit, to which, of course, he was no longer entitled. Ericksen (or Brother Ansgar, to give him his name in religion) was dealt with severely in a local Catholic magazine at Barnet, which resulted in his bringing an action for libel against the editor, Father Spink. To the great surprise not only of Catholics but of other people as well, the jury returned a verdict for the plaintiff, awarding him damages. There was no surprise, however, when on appeal the verdict was quashed by three judges, and the trial set aside. Nor need we be surprised at the further fact that

Ansgar took no steps to have a new trial moved for within the time allowed by law, but abandoned further proceedings against the priest. His charges with regard to the Marist congregation have continued, so it may be useful to have the above particulars on record.

Pastor Chiniquy

There are doubtless many Protestants who still believe the charges brought against the Catholic Church by the late Pastor Chiniquy in his *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome*. But a man does not remain associated for half a century with a communion which he afterwards discovers to have been full of corruption, without laying himself open to the charge of either telling lies or having been singularly complacent of evil! As a matter of fact, the volume in question, published in 1885, introduces charges which find no place in Chiniquy's earlier work, *Why I Left the Church of Rome*; while if we go further back to his autobiography, published by the Religious Tract Society in 1861, we there find his conversion to Protestantism stated as solely due to doctrinal considerations. It was not until he had been many years out of the Church that Chiniquy tickled the anti-Catholic palate with the more serious charges which give his *Fifty Years* its special spice. An examination of this book by Father Sydney Smith, S.J. (*Pastor Chiniquy*, C.T.S., 1d.) reveals its manifold inconsistencies and manifest libels. Of Chiniquy himself, as Father Smith shows, the evidence of letters and other documents relates a history that is by no means commendable. His uncle, a M. Dionne, had reason to doubt of him as early as 1825, when he ceased pay-

ing for Chiniquy's education and forbade him his house. In September 1851, eighteen years after his ordination, Bishop Bourget of Montreal had occasion to withdraw all priestly powers from him, in connection with a charge affecting his morality. Chiniquy wrote to the Bishop in the following month, saying: "I shall go and hide the disgrace of my position in the obscurest and least known corner of the United States." He went to America, but not into obscurity. Readmitted to priestly duty, he worked until 1856, when Bishop O'Regan suspended and afterwards excommunicated him on further charges of immorality. Details of these events, leading up to Chiniquy's apostasy in 1858, are given in the C.T.S. pamphlet, together with the text of letters from the ex-priest himself, and other persons, which effectually repel the statements in *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome.*

"THE REV. T. H. CLIFFORD, B.D."

This adventurer, an ex-soldier who posed as a Wesleyan minister, lectured for the Scottish Protestant Association at Ayr, N.B., where he carried on evangelistic meetings in the High Street and on the Low Green. We give him the name by which he called himself at that time, but it is not clear what his name really is. Clifford's police record is a bad one. In 1904, under the name of Smith, he received three months' imprisonment, with hard labour, for fraud in London. He had pretended in the City to be a paralytic cripple, but went nimbly home to the suburbs each evening, after his business day was done, living well on the charity he received. Later, he was imprisoned for six months for falsely representing himself to be an undergraduate of

Trinity College and a nephew of the Rev. Dr. Clifford. His wife secured a separation order in 1907, with maintenance; on two occasions Clifford went to prison for failing to pay this. He afterwards proceeded to Scotland with a woman named Ethel Brown, with whom he went through a bigamous form of marriage. In 1909 he was giving anti-Catholic lectures at Ayr, for the Association mentioned above; but after a time he left that body, pretended that he was a clergyman, and started the Free Gardeners' Hall Mission. On August 27, 1910, he was arrested on charges of falsely celebrating marriages and contravening the Registration of Births Act by causing false entries to be made in the birth register (in connection with his irregular life with Ethel Brown). In sentencing Clifford to eighteen months' imprisonment with hard labour, the Sheriff said the case was one of the worst he had recollected. Details of the trial are to be found in the *Ayrshire Post* for October 14, 1910.

Ellen Golding

Among the Protestant pamphlets issued by Mr. Kensit is one on "Convent Life, by Sister Mary Raymond." Although there is no mention of the fact, the story related is really that put forward by the late Miss Ellen Golding some years ago, after she had left the convent of La Sainte Union at Highgate, London. Her story, in brief, is that she was attracted to the Catholic Church by the glamour of its music and its ceremonies, that she entered the Order of the Sainte Union, and that her subsequent disillusion as to the virtues of the conventual life included the knowledge that poison was administered

to the nuns in their food, from which deaths had taken place in various convents in France to which she was from time to time attached. She had been in the Order about twenty-five years when, in August 1891, she made up her mind to leave. Her vows were only annual ones; she could have left the Order with full regularity and sanction in the month following; but instead of doing this she wrote a secret letter to a Protestant solicitor, who went to the convent and brought her away, after a "scene." The story got into the papers, and within a comparatively short time Miss Golding was secured for the Protestant platform. A visit to Bournemouth proved her undoing, as she was there taken in hand by a local priest, Father Cooney, S.J., and closely cross-examined, a professional shorthand writer being present to take down the questions and answers. The effect of the Catholic action was so entirely to discredit the "Rescued Nun" that after a short time her campaign was brought to an end. The full story, with many important details for which there is no space here, will be found in the C.T.S. pamphlet *Ellen Golding, the "Rescued Nun,"* by the Rev. S. F. Smith, S.J. (1d.).

William Jefferys

Calumnies against convents and monasteries are among the things that age cannot wither nor custom stale. It is getting on for seventy years since an impostor named William Jefferys produced his *Narrative of Six Years' Captivity and Suffering* at the hands of the monks at Mount St. Bernard's Abbey, Leicestershire, and although the story was publicly knocked on the head, and its author sent to gaol for three months as a rogue and a vagabond,

the *Vanguard*, a Protestant paper largely subsidized by the Hope Trust, reprinted it as recently as 1913, — for which the editor was forced to make an apology. Jefferys's lying *Narrative* so excited the neighbourhood of the Abbey in 1849 that threats were made to burn down the monastery. As a matter of fact, he had never been in the monastery, except to enjoy its hospitality as a guest. The Prior called for a magisterial inquiry into the charges, so that the case might be fully investigated. This was done, and the wretched Jefferys, after vainly endeavouring, on the spot, to locate the scenes of his sufferings, completely broke down, threw himself on his knees before the Superior, and confessed that the whole story was false. Although the community forgave him, the Protestants whom he had duped, including the printer of the *Narrative*, were not so lenient; Jefferys was taken to Wednesbury and lodged in prison, and received his sentence at the Handsworth Petty Sessions. A full summary of the facts of the case is supplied by James Britten, K.S.G., in the C.T.S. pamphlet on *An "Escaped Monk"* (1d.).

Sarah M'Cormack, the "White Nun"

"Now, Sarah, I want you to study these books, and you must get things out of them for to-night." The speaker was one Evans, "General" of a Salvation Army in Scotland with which the organization founded by General Booth had nothing to do and must not be confounded. The books were those of Maria Monk and Edith O'Gorman (see pp. 11, 16). "Sarah" was Sarah M'Cormack, a Glasgow servant-girl, who under Evans's direction was to read up these narratives and pose as an "escaped nun" from

the convent at Lanark, a place in which she had never set foot, as she afterwards confessed. This was in 1894. The lecturing career of the "White Nun," as she was called, came to an end after brief visits to Leith and Edinburgh; the police arrested her on a charge of "falsehood, fraud, and wilful imposition," and she received seven days' imprisonment. Evans, charged with abetting, got off on the Scottish verdict of "not proven"—a lucky escape, for, as the prosecutor said in Court, though the girl was foolish and wicked, the man charged with her was worse; he was a direct participator in the fraud. It turned out that Evans had taken the proceeds of the lectures, giving his dupe ten shillings a week and finding her in material for her revelations. A full account of the M'Cormack case was given in the *Glasgow Observer* for March and April 1894; a summary of it, from which this note has been written, will be found in a useful pamphlet on *The Truth about Convents*, by James Britten, K.S.G. (C.T.S., 1d.).

"Pastor" M'Donald

Several towns in Scotland—Motherwell, Campbeltown, and Hawick among them—have been lectured to by "Pastor" James M'Donald, also known as "the Kilwinning Martyr." This man started a Protestant Guild at Hawick, the members of which were drawn from sympathizers with his campaign. The Scottish field, however, proved less fruitful than he had hoped, so in November 1913 M'Donald purchased a ticket for New Zealand. The Protestant Guild subscribed a testimonial; but their interest and also the Pastor's movements were diverted when the police arrested

him on the charge of deserting his family. M'Donald pleaded not guilty, but on advice withdrew that plea and admitted the offence. The Sheriff said it was sad that a man should go about working in the name of religion and forget the primary Christian duty of maintaining his wife and children; he emphasized this view by fining the Kilwinning Martyr five pounds, or thirty days' imprisonment (*Glasgow Herald*, November 26, 1913). Two Protestant ministers at Hawick, the Rev. W. A. Ashby and the Rev. W. J. Ainslie, had previously (November 13) issued a leaflet to the public in which various unpleasant things are said about the "Pastor," who, it was stated, "is absolutely unworthy of support in any self-respecting community. . . . The sooner he is gone the better it will be for Hawick, and every good cause in it." In February 1914 M'Donald was in Edinburgh, where he was sentenced to ten days' imprisonment at the City Police Court for having obtained board and lodging without paying or intending to pay for them. The following May found him again at Hawick, where he was fined for attempting to enter a public-house while under the influence of drink.

Maria Monk

Who has not heard of the *Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk*? The book came out about eighty years ago, and continued for several generations to be a staple of Protestant literature; this is no longer the case, as respectable Protestants will have nothing to do with it, and for the most part it is stocked by purveyors of pornographic books and pictures, although it has still a certain vogue with

anti-Catholic firebrands of the baser sort. Maria Monk's story related to events which she alleged had taken place in the Hôtel Dieu Convent at Montreal. Cruelty, immorality, murder—all were included in the indictment. From the first her statements were disbelieved by the authorities, and it was not long before a complete investigation, by Protestants themselves, demonstrated the utter falsity of the narrative. A Protestant gentleman of New York, Colonel W. L. Stone, accompanied by others, went to Montreal and probed the matter to the bottom ; the visitors examined every part of the convent, and tested every detail advanced by Maria Monk, and the Colonel's signed verdict was that "Maria Monk is an arrant impostor, and her book, in all its essential features, a tissue of calumnies." Mr. John Ostell, an architect, proved that an alleged plan of the convent, printed with the *Disclosures*, could by no possibility be true. Protestant ministers, magistrates, and others visited the Hôtel Dieu and vindicated it by letters and affidavits. As a matter of fact, Maria Monk was a girl of bad character, who so far from having been a nun was instead an inmate of the Magdalen Asylum for fallen women, from which institution she drew the characters introduced into the *Disclosures*. Her end was as follows: in 1849 she was arrested for stealing from a paramour, and sent to prison, where she died. See *The True History of Maria Monk* (C.T.S., 1d.).

Margaret Mary Moult

In February 1909 the English Press gave wide publicity to an "escape" from the well-known Benedictine convent at East Bergholt, Suffolk.

The facts of the case, separated from its fictions, related to a Miss Margaret Moult, in religion Dame Maurus, who made a secret departure from the convent and was for a brief period an "escaped nun" lecturer on the Protestant platform. It is due to her to say that her narrative, both on the platform and in a book which appeared in her name, was happily free from the kind of suggestions and innuendoes that one so often finds in attacks on the conventual life; and as Miss Moult has since married and given up lecturing, it might seem a charitable duty to omit all reference to her case. But this cannot be done, first of all because the omission would be misunderstood as a desire to suppress unpleasant facts, and next because her book is still in circulation. All that need be said here, however, is that an investigation of the matter was undertaken by three local gentlemen of position, all of them non-Catholics: Mr. Thomas Robertson, a magistrate, Mr. W. S. Calvert, Lord of the Manor, and the Rev. E. A. Ley, Vicar of Manningtree. These gentlemen visited the convent without any previous intimation: "We were allowed," they reported, "to converse freely with any of the nuns apart from the presence of the Superiors, and were struck with the expressions of contentment and happiness used by all whom we addressed in talking of their daily life." The report concludes: "In fine, after a lengthened investigation we could find no foundation for the charges made in the book published under the title of *The Escaped Nun.*" Those who desire a full statement of the case are referred to the C.T.S. pamphlet by Father Sydney Smith, S.J., on *The Escaped Nun from East Bergholt* (1d.).

Minnie Murphy

Minnie Murphy is not an important person, but her case, besides the fact that it is a fairly recent one, supplies a typical instance of the readiness with which a certain section of the English Press will lay hold of any "escaped nun" story, however wildly improbable, and give it currency without either suspicion or inquiry. On May 25, 1912, the *Sheffield Independent* printed a startling story, with no less startling headlines: "SAVE ME FROM THIS PRISON! DRAMATIC STORY OF CONVENT LIFE. SHEFFIELD PLOT. ESCAPED NUN WHO SLEPT IN HER COFFIN." It appeared that "a bright-eyed, bonny girl, of frank, open countenance," had spoken in a train about her intention of entering a convent. "A shrewd little woman" tried to dissuade her, and gave the girl her visiting-card. So much for the prologue; the story opens with the receipt of a letter by the shrewd little woman aforesaid: "Will you try to get me from this prison of misery," it ran, "or I shall die." Posing as the girl's aunt, the benefactress went to the address, St. Vincent's Home, Ancoats, Manchester, and took Minnie away. Speedily a narrative was forthcoming, of scourgings, and drudgery, and a dark punishment cell, and sleeping in one's own coffin—a story palpably absurd; yet it was accepted without question, without any investigation, by the editor of the *Independent*, and was copied into the *Weekly Dispatch* in London, and, needless to say, also into the Protestant Press. Exposure was not long in coming. Dean Dolan of Sheffield showed the impossibility of the details given, and the *Sheffield Telegraph*, a rival organ, made first-hand inquiries at Ancoats, by which the whole story collapsed like a house of cards. Minnie

Murphy herself fled from her Protestant friends, leaving a note behind her in which she confessed to having deceived them. The truth was that she had never been in a convent at all. At the home at Ancoats she was a laundry girl; her previous history included residence in two Catholic institutions in Dublin, and work, as a servant, in a home at Preston. For the full story, see *Minnie Murphy's Mendacities* (C.T.S., 1d.).

Titus Oates

In point of time Titus Oates, going back as he does to the seventeenth century, heads the list of the various anti-Catholics who are pilloried in this pamphlet. His character is aptly expressed in the first three words of the notice about him in the *Dictionary of National Biography*: "Oates, Titus, perjurer"; it is a qualification making him the father-in-kind of many who have come after him. This scoundrel belongs to English history, and is so well and unenviably known that his inclusion here is more for the sake of suitability than of necessity. Oates contrived to get admitted to orders in the Established Church, but soon gave signs of his later vocation by bringing a trumped-up charge against a schoolmaster, the failure of which led to his being thrown into prison. He escaped and joined the Navy as a chaplain, from which office he was expelled. It was about 1677 that Oates began his campaign of calumny against Catholics. Pretending to be reconciled as a Catholic himself, he was actually received into the college at Valladolid, but after a few months was ignominiously expelled. Later on he fabricated his story of a "Popish plot," on the strength of which—sustained by the perjured testi-

mony of a second scoundrel named Bedloe—wholesale arrests were made and innocent men, one after another, put to death. Oates was well paid and lodged by the Government, and fêted and fed, until the tide of his fortunes turned in 1681. Popular credulity was now largely exhausted as to the supposed plot, but not until between thirty and forty Catholics had been judicially murdered, among them the Venerable Oliver Plunket. Titus Oates fell from his pinnacle, and when James II. came to the throne he was tried for perjury, and ordered to be imprisoned and whipped. Financial and other relief came to him with the Orange *régime*, but he remained hopelessly discredited until his death in 1705—"a most consummate cheat, blasphemer, vicious, perjured, impudent, and saucy, foul-mouth'd wretch" (Roger North).

Edith O'Gorman

One of the very few survivors in the ex-nun business, Mrs. O'Gorman Auffray, the "Escaped Nun," is still (1915) prepared in her old age to tell English Protestant audiences about her sufferings, her escape, and her subsequent persecution by Catholics. It is an old story—how she joined the Sisters of Charity in New Jersey, witnessed various cruelties to children who were under the Sisters' care, was annoyed and almost drugged by a priest, fled from the convent, went through divers adventures, and finally received the light of Protestant conviction. Her statement, frequently made, that Catholics have not attempted any reply to her charges, no longer holds good: there is a C.T.S. pamphlet, *Edith O'Gorman and her Book* (1d.), which sufficiently refutes Mrs. Auffray's story out of her

own mouth; for it compares very closely two editions of her narrative, divided by an interval of thirty years, and exposes flaws which are vital. For example, the story of the alleged escape is differently related, in the two editions, in regard both to the place and circumstances: in one edition (1871) the "escape" takes the very mild form of leaving a school-house in the city of Newark, New Jersey; while in the later version (1901) the scene is shifted to the convent at Jersey City, where she "softly unlocked the doors and gates" and so departed. She is proved to have kept up communication with, and written in defence of, the priest who comes into her story, and it is shown that the text of letters and newspaper reports has been altered to suit the purposes of the book. Edith O'Gorman's charges, tested in this way, break down in every important particular.

Ex-Priest Roche

Described by *Truth* (December 8, 1909) as "an utterly unprincipled scoundrel," ex-priest Roche supplies one of a number of instances where moral unworthiness has proved to be no bar to the anti-Catholic lecture platform. The Lanarkshire Protestant Crusade and Evangelical Mission of Scotland engaged Roche among its lecturers some years ago; an inquiry beforehand, in the proper quarter, would have elicited the following facts about him. Roche was for several years attached to the Catholic mission at Selkirk, where his conduct gave rise to continual scandals: he was intemperate, and a lady who passed as his sister had in reality been married to him many years previously. On one occasion he exhibited a tradesman's bill with a stamped receipt

at foot ; the tradesman repudiated the signature as a forgery, and the handwriting was clearly that of Roche himself. Deprived of his priestly office in 1906, Roche left Selkirk and went to Edinburgh, leaving behind him various unpaid debts, among them his liquor bills. On June 10 of that year he was admitted to the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, suffering from acute alcoholism, and remained there for ten days. Subsequently he took to writing begging-letters. Utterly unscrupulous, he offered to say mass in return for help, well knowing that his deprivation made him no longer capable of doing so ; and while appealing to the Superior of a Catholic convent for assistance, he was actually appearing in public and denouncing the Catholic Faith. The editor of *Truth* says, referring again to Roche as "a dissolute hypocrite," that "if these are the sort of champions on whom Protestantism depends, the cause is truly in a parlous state."

"Ex-Priest Ruthven"

The above is the name assumed by Michael Riordan, an apostate who came to England from the United States about 1899, and began to deliver the customary lectures, a compound of invention and indecency, which one looks for, and gets, in men of this class. The Catholic Truth Society secured his American record, which supplied the reason why "Ruthven" should prefer to try the English Protestant field. The testimony against him was largely that of Presbyterian newspapers and clergymen. Riordan had been expelled from the Baptist Church as a fraud ; he had been in gaol for misappropriation of funds, which he had been collecting in the name of the Rev. Dr. Paton, the well-known

missionary, who described the affair in his autobiography and supported it on oath at the trial of a libel action brought by Riordan against Father De Bom, the priest at Shanklin, Isle of Wight. Besides the C.T.S., *Truth* took the matter up, and printed a number of exposures of Riordan's past. It was in 1901 that the libel action against Father De Bom took place, which resulted in a verdict for the defendant on one count and for the plaintiff on another. When, in the course of the proceedings, extracts from Riordan's lectures were read, Mr. Justice Ridley ordered all women and boys out of court. The Judge's summing-up (since printed by the C.T.S. as a pamphlet, *The Judge and the Ex-Priest*) is one of the most scathing pronouncements regarding anti-Catholic lectures of this kind that have ever issued from the Bench. That Riordan left hotel bills unpaid, and was charged with using threats with a revolver, are among the records of his minor offences.

Margaret Shepherd

Among the many impostors who have posed as convent victims it would not be easy to find an example at once so fraudulent and so depraved as the late Margaret L. Shepherd, anti-Catholic lecturer, writer, and creator of a Protestant women's society in America. She was never a nun: her only association with the conventual life was derived from institutions, under the care of nuns, for incorrigible girls or fallen women. She was for a time at Arno's Vale Convent, Bristol, not as a nun but among the penitent prostitutes whom that community looks after. In many respects Margaret Shepherd is to be classed with Maria Monk,—certainly she

was no better, and on the whole was rather worse. Her entire life, almost from childhood, was one of criminality and deceit. She passed under various names. As "Miss Douglas" she was arrested for forging Lord Archibald Douglas's name. At Bodmin, Cornwall, and in London, she was imprisoned at different times on criminal charges, in the names of Parkyn and Edgerton. At another time she was "Margaret Herbert," and claimed relationship to Lady Herbert. It was after she ran away from Arno's Vale that Margaret Shepherd began her career of imposture and deception against the Church. She was befriended by the Salvation Army, and went to America under its auspices; there she betrayed the trust reposed in her, and subsequently Florence Booth wrote: "I have no doubt at all but this woman is a fraud." She deceived the late Mr. W. T. Stead, whose disillusion found expression in the advice to an inquirer about her: "The less you have to do with the lady you mention the better it will be for your peace of mind and the security of the contents of your pockets." Mrs. Shepherd supported her vile lectures with obscene books, on account of which the authorities at Brooklyn issued a warrant against her in 1901. She victimized people right and left, among them several Nonconformist clergymen, who wrote letters warning the public of her true character. She died in 1903, leaving behind her about as bad a record as it is possible for this sort of person to accumulate.

Pastor Silva

In the spring of 1914 the Protestant lecture platform in England received another recruit in the person of "Pastor Silva," an Italian apostate priest whose

alleged story has been circulated by the Waldensian Church Mission Society under the title of "Father Frederick." This man is an ex-Capuchin friar, who apostatized and married and was afterwards connected with a Waldensian mission near Genoa. The story of his conversion to Protestantism is a variant of the well-worn legend of Luther's discovery of a Bible. Pastor Silva also discovered one among "prohibited and dangerous" works in the library of the friary at Bergamo, to which his appointment as librarian had given him access; he took it to his cell, read it, and was "converted" as the result! At a meeting held in St. Paul's Church Room, South Kensington, on April 30, 1914, Pastor Silva was tackled by Mr. A. Hilliard Atteridge, the Secretary of the C.T.S. Catholic Defence Sub-committee. Mr. Atteridge was able to demonstrate the falsity of the Pastor's statement by reading extracts from the Capuchin Rule itself, in which the reading and study of Holy Scripture is specially enjoined. Pastor Silva's rejoinder was that such a rule belonged to the thirteenth century, and was now obsolete; but his shot failed signally to hit the mark, for the edition from which Mr. Atteridge read was issued in 1905. This single instance will serve to show the character and worthlessness of this ex-priest's statements; other particulars will be found in *Catholic Book Notes* for August 1914 (p. 289).

The Slatterys

In 1897–98 an ex-priest named Joseph Slattery, accompanied by Mrs. Slattery, a sham nun, were giving anti-Catholic lectures in various parts of England, particularly in the north. The Slatterys, like Ruthven (see p. 18), were an American importation;

they came to this country bearing "the highest testimonials from well-known gentlemen in America," and were launched upon the English public by the Protestant Alliance. It was not long before Catholics over here were in possession of the facts, mainly due to a pamphlet issued by the C.T.S. of America. Joseph Slattery was a priest of the Dublin archdiocese who gave way to drink. He had been warned by Cardinal M'Cabe and Archbishop Walsh, but to no good end, and the Archbishop was obliged to give him up. Slattery left Ireland, and was next heard of as a student for the Baptist ministry at Hamilton, New York, where he posed as having abandoned the priesthood from "conscientious scruples." Exposure of the truth led to his expulsion, and he then went to the Baptists at Philadelphia, but there also he was expelled. He and the woman took to the lecture platform in America before coming to England and Scotland. At Edinburgh they were prosecuted for selling "an indecent and obscene book," for publishing which Slattery had been imprisoned at Pittsburg. His "testimonials," when examined, are found to be either bogus or worthless. As to Mrs. Slattery, who lectured, and produced a book, as an "ex-nun," it need only be said that her whole story is a string of fictions, as to her convent life and all connected with it. See *The Slatterys*, by James Britten, K.S.G. (C.T.S., 1d.), for a complete exposure of this couple.

Theodore Von Husen

It was in the summer of 1912 that this person first came under notice as an anti-Catholic lecturer. Under the auspices of Mr. Kensit's crusade he was introduced to audiences at Teddington as an ex-

priest; in support of this claim Von Husen put forward various particulars, *e.g.* the date of his ordination, and that he was known at Cologne Cathedral and Archbishop's House, Westminster. Inquiry at both places elicited, as was expected, the reply in each case that nothing whatever was known there about him. At one time he would pose as an ex-Jesuit, at another as an ex-Franciscan. The details he gave of his life would make him a sub-deacon when less than fourteen years of age, and a priest before he was eighteen. Challenged at one of his meetings as to the words of consecration, he hazarded "*Corpus Christum meum factum tuum*"![1] Von Husen fell into the hands of the police in September 1913, and in the following month was convicted at the Central Criminal Court and sentenced to gaol for three months for indecent conduct, the jury finding him guilty without leaving the box. At the hearing various facts about him transpired. He had been married twenty years previously. For two years he had worked in London as a painter and decorator, changing into semi-clerical garb in the evenings and thus becoming "Father Von Husen" of the Protestant lecture platform. Mr. A. Hilliard Atteridge, who had already exposed Von Husen at a public meeting, has done so in fuller detail in the C.T.S. pamphlet entitled *The Record of an Impostor* (1d.).

Francis George Widdows

"Ex-Monk Widdows," as he likes to call himself, is another of the "Pastors" of the anti-Catholic platform; he has filled that office at the Martin

[1] The chairman on this occasion was the notorious "Ex-Monk" Widdows (see below).

Luther Church at Hackney, London, but his spiritual ministry has been interrupted by enforced retirement—in other words, Widdows has more than once been imprisoned for a serious offence, and at present (1915) is serving yet another sentence. This man, whose name is properly Nobbs, was never a Catholic. He is not an ex-monk; his only association with a religious community is in the fact that he was befriended by the late Father Ignatius, the Anglican monk, then at Norwich, afterwards at Llanthony. In 1888 Widdows was tried at the Central Criminal Court and sentenced to ten years' penal servitude; it transpired at the trial that he had been previously convicted of indecency in 1875, at Toronto, and imprisoned for five months.[1] The autobiographical details which this ex-convict supplies, in proof of his claim to be also an ex-Franciscan, make interesting reading. He states that he was taken by a Capuchin priest to France, entered a Franciscan novitiate in Paris, and took his vows at Lyons in 1869, afterwards going to Rome. But according to the *Daily Telegraph* for February 18, 1869, Widdows was at that time in London, and not only in London but also in the dock at Marylebone Police Court, charged as a result of a quarrel with a man named Hughes, the two of them being partners in a general shop. *Truth* (June 4, 1896) says that "the most rabid Protestant, unless he is destitute of all sense of decency and self-respect, should be ashamed to give his countenance and support to a lecturer of Widdows' character and antecedents."

[1] In 1902 he was again found guilty, in London, of an indecent offence, and sentenced to two years' hard labour.

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MR. BLATHERTON'S YULE-LOG

WHEN Mr. Blatherton settled down in Scorford, Father Utchby was approaching eighty. For nearly forty years the good priest had administered to a scattered and an unwieldy parish, and it may be said at once that if there was a single member of his flock who did not love and reverence him, it was because that individual did not know him.

But when Mr. Blatherton came he seemed anxious to impress everybody with the fact that he had neither love nor reverence for any man living—least of all for his parish priest. At first people set him down as a crank—there is generally one faddy, meddlesome, mischievous person in every parish—rather an aggressive one perhaps, but in no way dangerous. He had not been in Scorford three months before he had quarrelled with every person he knew.

Yet to say that he had quarrelled with Father Utchby is scarcely a fact, for, as we know, it takes two.

to make a quarrel, and the old priest could not get angry even if he tried. It was well known that on one extreme occasion he had tried to be very angry indeed with a certain ne'er-do-well, and that he had failed completely.

That Mr. Blatherton's aggressive interference and open hostility were a great trial to the good old Father was patent enough, and when he died—a little more than a year after Blatherton's arrival —there were those who did not scruple to say that his death had been hastened by grief—and Blatherton.

Father Utchby's successor was a priest of middle age, earnest and hearty, strong and vigorous. Of course he had to hear much about his predecessor, much also concerning Mr. Blatherton. He was begged by his parishioners not to permit himself to be worried to death by a truculent stranger. At this Father Hartwood was much amused, and assured his people that he was very well able to take care of himself. He took an early opportunity of calling upon Blatherton—who talked at him, rather than to him, for two whole hours, and would have occupied another hour if the priest had not taken himself off.

Two months later the Bishop came down to Scorford, unexpectedly. He arrived on a Sunday morning, just as the last Mass was beginning, and remained in a dark corner of the church under the organ

gallery for the sermon and to the end of the service. Only the door-keeper saw and recognized his lordship.

Severely cross-questioned by her friends, the priest's housekeeper said afterwards that the Bishop had dined at the Presbytery ; that he and Father Hartwood had talked and laughed like two happy children out for a holiday ; that his lordship had taken a little walk in the afternoon and left Scorford at five o'clock after having a cup of tea. Subsequently it became known that the Bishop had called upon Mr. Blatherton. This was all that the parishioners ever knew, for Father Hartwood did not encourage gossip. But he kept and has still in his possession the packet of letters written by Blatherton to the Bishop, letters in which he charges his parish priest with every irregularity of ritual and music, and every error of doctrine that could be crammed into nearly thirty letters averaging sixteen pages each.

Happily the Bishop had lived with Father Hartwood for years on a northern mission, was indeed one of his oldest and most intimate friends. And after a few minutes' talk with Blatherton, his lordship knew quite as much of *him* as he cared to know. From that Sunday the troublesome malcontent ceased to attend any service at Scorford, but gave it out that the irregularities of his parish priest forced him to hear Mass in a church many miles away. It is quite unnecessary to say that all the irregularities were to

be found in Blatherton himself; indeed, as time went on he ceased to practise his religion in any way, and from being a conceited and discontented egotist the developed into an apostate.

It was said that he dabbled in spiritualism, toyed with Esoteric Buddhism, trifled with something that is at once unchristian and unscientific but which calls itself Christian Science. He had no Catholic friends in Scorford, and he had always made it a rule not to keep Catholic servants, the truth being that no servants, Catholic or otherwise, would ever remain with him for a month—the exception being his old housekeeper, who had been in his service many years.

Blatherton had lost his faith, and, as so frequently happens, various foolish superstitions began to take its place. A man without a creed is necessarily credulous. Being a person of leisure and of means, Blatherton read more than he could digest, and being a person of small education and inferior judgement, his mind became a sort of limbo of absurdities. As a Catholic he had laughed at the superstitions of the country-side: they now seemed to him to be matters of the highest importance.

When Blatherton had lived in Scorford for nearly thirteen years his faithful and long-suffering old housekeeper died after a very short illness: at this time, of course, he had been out of the Church for a very long period. Some people wished him out of

the parish, and it was because he knew this that he had determined not to budge. Now that he had lost his old servant, he was in a great difficulty, and one in which nobody in Scorford was willing to help him. It seemed now that he would really have to go elsewhere; however, he determined to advertise for a housekeeper in all the local and county papers. After endless trouble, Mrs. Bingham, a widow of a little past middle age, accepted the situation. She was a strong-looking woman, and he soon found that her housewifery was of a very superior kind. She had been with him a month when to his wrath he discovered that she was a Catholic.

He stormed and raved like a maniac, but Mrs. Bingham was quite unmoved. She merely pulled down her sleeves, took off her white apron, folded it up, and turned to leave him — storming and raving. Asked what she was about to do, she replied that she was going to pack her trunk. Blatherton bade her listen to him, but she was already upstairs.

A little sobered he awaited her coming down.

"Don't you be a fool," he said when she appeared: "I'm not going to discharge you!"

"Indeed you're not," she replied, "I have already discharged myself."

"Listen to reason, woman!" he exclaimed.

"What, from an unreasonable man like you?"

He was so taken aback that he could not immediately retort.

"No, Mr. Blatherton," she went on, "I will not remain under the same roof with you another half-hour. You have sworn at me before; you have frequently shown yourself to be a man of an ungovernable temper. I made no remonstrance, as you know. But now you have spoken insultingly of the one thing in the world that I value, and that is my religion. *Now* we must part."

He began to plead with her. He had never been so comfortable before; never had his meals been so tempting. He would give her any wages she wanted. Her religion would be respected. She might go to church whenever she wished. She could even invite the priest to the house—though he had sworn that no priest should ever again cross his threshold.

For nearly ten minutes Mrs. Bingham listened in silence. Her mind was made up, and to all that he said she only shook her head. It was only when he spoke of the priest that she remembered what Father Hartwood had said to her a day or two before: "Mrs. Bingham, it was the Providence of God that brought you to that man's house. He is getting old; remain with him. You may be very useful to him when he comes to die. You are the first Catholic he has ever had in his house."

Mrs. Bingham now said that she would reconsider

her departure. Later in the day she laid down the terms upon which she would remain, and Mr. Blatherton accepted them thankfully.

It was Christmas Eve. On Mrs. Bingham's kitchen fire burnt a big Yule-log. Mr. Blatherton, who for some time past had been ailing, pausing on the threshold, looked at it in dismay.

"Oh dear," he exclaimed, "I do hope you'll be careful! There are so many things to consider when you burn a Yule-log. Fearful ill-luck will happen to the master of the house if—if——"

"If what?" demanded the housekeeper.

"Well—yes—let me see! I must look them up in my books! I can only remember one or two at the moment. . . . No person who squints must ever be allowed to enter the house while that log is burning; you know that, of course?"

"What silly nonsense!" she exclaimed.

"Indeed, it's not," he returned. "But the most dreadful thing of all is for a barefooted person to come in. That entails a horrible catastrophe."

She looked at him and smiled. The maids were afraid of him and thought him half-mad; Mrs. Bingham was not afraid.

"I know nobody in the village who squints," she said. "And as for the barefooted—well, there's an obvious remedy for that, isn't there?"

"Is there?" he asked eagerly: "What is it?"

"Give them hosen and shoon, of course," she said with a smile. "There are some barefooted children in the village, and they are the very ones who are sure to come to the house, begging."

"They mustn't! *they mustn't*!" he cried excitedly. "They must be kept away at any cost."

"Give me a five-pound note, Mr. Blatherton, and I'll undertake to keep them away — until they're shod."

"You shall have it at once," he replied.

Mrs Bingham enjoyed herself immensely that Christmas Eve. There was only one really poor district in the big village, and she was quite familiar with it. In an hour and a half she had the joy of seeing seventeen more or less shoeless boys and girls wearing warm woollen stockings and strong new boots.

That Christmas night several bands of carol-singers came to the door, and Mr. Blatherton did not send them away, as he had been wont to do; indeed, he astonished his housekeeper by giving her another five pounds for Christmas boxes and alms, remarking that as a good Catholic she would know how best to dispose of the money. His speech was kinder and his manner gentler than she had ever known them to be. At Holy Mass and at the Crib she had much to say to the Adorable Child concerning her master. Moreover, there were old people and young people praying for him that Christmas Day, and for many days.

On New Year's Eve some singers came again, and this is part of what they sang:

The moon shone bright, and the stars gave light
A little before it was day,
Our Lord, our God, He called on us,
And bid us awake and pray.

. . . . . .

To-day you may be alive, dear man,
Worth many a thousand pound;
To-morrow you may be dead, dear man,
And your body be laid under ground.

With one turf at your head, O man,
And another at your feet,
Thy good deeds and thy bad, O man,
Will all together meet.

My song is done, I must be gone,
I can stay no longer here.
God bless you all, both great and small,
And send you a happy New Year.

. . . . . .

In the March of the following year Mr. Blatherton became seriously ill.

"I want to see my horoscope," he said to Mrs. Bingham, who was nursing him.

"You *need* to see a priest," she pleaded gently.

He turned away his head impatiently enough, and for the remainder of that day he did not speak, except to say "Yes" and "No." But on the following morning he turned to Mrs. Bingham and said:

"Do you think Father Hartwood would come if I sent for him?"

"You know very well he would," was her quick reply.

In a very few minutes the Father was at Mr. Blatherton's bedside.

On the following morning the penitent died.

A CHRISTMAS CARD

MR. MARK HUDSON, of the firm of Naylor, Hudson & Co., was about to leave his office. It was Christmas Eve, and though he had no appointment for the evening he seemed to be in something of a hurry to get away. It was barely five o'clock and he seldom left business until half-past five; but to-night he felt unaccountably disturbed and restless.

A post came in about this time, but he had no intention of waiting for it. However, he had scarcely put on his overcoat when a clerk handed him some half-dozen letters. He did not even glance at the envelopes, but thrust them hastily into the breast-pocket of his coat. Nor did he think of them again until he had finished his solitary dinner.

Four of them were business letters of no great importance, but the envelope and the handwriting of the fifth puzzled him.

"Begging-letter, no doubt!" he ejaculated as he opened it; "no, a Christmas-card seemingly. Who in the world can have sent me a Christmas-card?"

The torn envelope fluttered to the floor. Mr. Hudson leant back in his chair, his eyes fixed—not upon a Christmas-card but upon a carte-de-visite—a portrait—the portrait of a boy. And that boy was himself!

"Queer joke, this!" he muttered to himself; but though he did not smile he was not conscious of any feeling of annoyance. The boy in the portrait was smiling. The man, his eyes fixed upon the card, sighed deeply.

Such a strange medley of thoughts and feelings began to possess him. The cigar which he had so carefully selected and cut before looking at his letters lay unlighted. For a moment it seemed to him that he ought to be annoyed with the sender of the card, if only because of its arrival on Christmas Eve. Surely the season brought memories enough without having them added to by the smiling face of this little rustic lad! Christmas had long been to him a difficult time, though he would not allow it to be an unhappy one. He wished the portrait had not reached him on this particular night.

Yet he was glad to be in possession of it. He told himself that he would not part with it for the world. To be ashamed of this lad in his country clothes and hobnailed highlows was the last thing to be thought of. He would have the photograph handsomely framed and hung on the wall of his dining-room: better still, it should stand upon the mantel-

piece in his study. There were many things in his past life of which he was ashamed, but the fact that he had begun life as a very poor boy was not one of them.

But by whom had the portrait been sent? This was the question he was trying to answer. He had the clearest recollection of the taking of the photograph: it had been done in part payment of a debt owing to his mother. At the time it was taken he must have been nearing thirteen, and a year after that he left Lacebury to become an office-boy in the house of which he was now a partner. But to whom had his dear dead mother given copies?

Picking up the envelope he examined it closely. Yes, the Lacebury postmark was on it, but the handwriting did not help him in the least. Stay, there was a scrap of paper in the envelope! He had not noticed that in taking out the card; and there was writing upon it, but no signature:—

"*Wishing Mr. Hudson a merry Christmas and hoping he will not forget the poor at this time.*"

This was no begging-letter: it was a reminder—not one that Hudson was in particular need of, for at no time of the year were the poor forgotten by him. Still, he did not resent the reminder: he only wondered more and more by whom it had been penned, and to whom he was indebted for the photograph.

He had no difficulty in remembering just how long it was since he had visited Lacebury: it was nearly twelve years ago, and the occasion had been the saddest of his life—his mother's funeral. That was unforgettable. His father's death he scarcely remembered, for at that time he was barely four years old. Now he was in his forty-second year. If only the poor mother could have lived to see him a comparatively rich man! Well, he had never failed in his duty to her: he had helped her all he could. And she had lived to see him filling a responsible position and in receipt of a good salary.

After her death he had felt that he could never again visit Lacebury. Of course there were people who remembered him; though there was a gap of nearly thirty years between then and now. How many of the old inhabitants could he call to mind? And their sons and daughters — those who were children when he himself was a child?

At his elbow was a volume he was longing to read, but he left it unopened. To-night he would look carefully through the Book of Memory. If some of its pages proved saddening, at least it possessed many pleasing pictures, many bright and cheering passages.

For two long hours Mark Hudson sat musing: then he fell into a half-sleep. He was roused by the

carol-singers. He hummed the tune that they were singing: it was a carol he had known all his life. Yet he was not thinking of the carol. He had dreamed a dream, and the picture of a little child was still in the eye of his mind. He had nursed her as a baby. She was a neighbour's child and her mother was a dressmaker, and, like his own mother, a widow. The two women had been great friends, had helped each other as only the poor know how to help the poor. Yes, when he left Lacebury little Teresa must have been five or six. He had liked her, and had been kind to her; but she must have loved him, now he came to think about it, for he distinctly remembered that they dared not tell her that he was leaving home for good. How she used to cling to him! No little sister could have been fonder of a big brother than Teresa was of him. In more than one letter they had told him how she pined after her dear Mark. But at the time of his mother's funeral he had heard that she was married, and he did not think that they had met on that saddest of sad days. Yet the more he thought of her the more he felt inclined to connect her with the sending of the photograph. That she had possessed a copy of it was the likeliest thing in the world.

A desire to see Lacebury, an almost intense longing to go there seized him. The street outside his flat seemed to be full of Christmas music of various sorts. It was half-past eleven, and would soon be time for

him to start for Midnight Mass. He was going to Confession and to Communion.

On Christmas Day Mr. Mark Hudson arrived at the *Green Man*, Lacebury, in the middle of the afternoon. He had lunched in the train, and he told the landlady that he would dine at half-past seven on whatever the house could provide for him. He would want a bed for three nights at least. Then he took a walk through the village. Coming down in the train he had made all his plans.

He found Lacebury changed, but not to the extent he had expected. It gave him a pang to see that the house in which he was born, with the little shop his mother had kept, had disappeared: so had the cottage of Teresa's mother: two shops had taken their places. He greatly wanted to see Teresa's mother: it was quite likely that Teresa herself had remained in Lacebury after her marriage. The one long street was empty: it was Christmas Day and everybody was indoors, either drinking tea or preparing to do so.

To call upon the priest was his ultimate intention, though it was not in the least likely that Father O'Brien, a middle-aged man when Mark was a boy, was still living. There were very few Catholics in the neighbourhood, and the mission was only kept going by the generosity of the Seaton family who lived at the Manor House.

Looking up as he neared the end of the street he saw a clerical-looking figure coming along the road. Mark met him and saluted, saying: "Am I right, Father, in thinking you are a Catholic priest?" He was perfectly right, and he turned to walk back with the priest. Father Sweeny soon told him all he wanted to know, and after promising to dine with him on the following evening, guided him to the cottage where Teresa and her mother were living together.

"Yes, it is a sad case," said the priest sympathetically: "mother and daughter both widows, living together, and with three children—the eldest about ten. But they are wonderfully brave. Of course the Seatons are very good to them; still they have a hard struggle. How delighted they will be to see you! They have often told me about you; in fact, they have a likeness of you taken when you were a boy. Not that I should have recognized you from that . . . Yes, Teresa's husband was a Catholic, and a good one. Killed instantly, poor fellow, by a motor-car. But he was not unprepared: had been to his duties the day before."

Mark Hudson did not remain in Lacebury for the three days he had spoken of; in fact, he travelled up to London on Boxing Day. But at the end of Christmas week he returned to Lacebury and remained at the *Green Man* for ten days. And on the

tenth day there was a quiet but very pretty wedding in the little Catholic church at Lacebury.

On the same day Mr. and Mrs. Hudson, her three boys and her mother, left Lacebury for a newly-furnished house at Hampstead.

A CHRISTMAS REVELATION

I SHALL be sixty-eight in January, and on the particular Christmas Eve I am going to tell you about, I was looking forward to my thirteenth birthday; so you see it was a matter of fifty-five years ago.

We were farmers, and four of my elder brothers, as well as my mother, were musical. We formed about one half of the choir at church, and the Vicar—who thought himself musical, but wasn't—made much of us. He was a Tractarian and very anxious indeed to improve the music in church and to restore the building itself. It was he who started the carol-singing, or rather, revived it, for little by little the old band of Waits had been broken up.

My mother always said I had a beautiful voice, and if you can take her word for it, pray do so, for she was a truthful woman. A boy is no judge of his own gifts, but I fancy my untrained organ was rather strong than sweet: what I am sure of is, that I had a good ear and that I never sang flat. Well, to sing in tune is something, isn't it?

Never shall I forget that night. I can see the old house-place now with its big roaring fire, and its walls half-hidden with holly and ivy. I can remember the supper we sat down to at nine o'clock—the care with which my mother wrapped me up, though I was as sturdy as a young pony—my getting the lantern ready for our noctual walk—our surprise when on going out we found that it had begun to snow, though at eight o'clock it had been raining—my running indoors again to soak my heavy boots in oil—my father's parting injunction that we should return home as soon after midnight as possible.

We had arranged every detail of our round and agreed that, however much we might be pressed, we would not enter any house or accept any hospitality. For this year our singing had a serious purpose. The Vicar had opened a subscription-list for the restoration of the church, and we intended to call later at every house we had stopped to sing at and collect money for the parson.

Now at that time our Squire was non-resident, and the Hall was let to strangers. We knew very little of these strangers, for though they had taken the house in September, they had only come to it now and again for a few days' shooting; however, there was a rumour in the village that they were expected to spend Christmas at the Hall and probably to remain there for some time. Workmen had been busy enough there for over a month.

The Hall was not more than half a mile from our farm, but though we had felt very much inclined to call there first of all, and while our voices were fresh, my father thought it would be better if we stopped there on our way back, as then it would be close upon midnight. So we did this.

By twelve o'clock the snow had almost ceased falling. As we approached the Hall we noticed that all along the front the lights were low, but that in the east wing there was something very like an illumination. We made for that wing, and as we did so the bell in the clock-tower tolled twelve.

We had selected our best carol, and my eldest brother was just about to give us the signal to strike up, when there reached my ear the most glorious strain of organ music I had ever heard in my life. We stood transfixed and listened: as we did so there rose a burst of choral singing of so sweet and unexpected a kind that I began to sob aloud.

"S-h-h-h!" whispered my brother—who to tell the truth was almost as much moved as myself, for as he laid a kindly hand on my shoulder and drew me towards him I perceived that he was trembling.

The music ceased, and as we stood there we saw a lighted lantern coming through the park. As it neared us we perceived that it was carried by a man, who, with his wife and children, was hurrying towards the east wing. When he saw us he came up and said: "Come inside, whoever you are: it's too cold

to stand about. And the chapel's open to anybody who cares to come: Mr. Fitzhenry has said so."

We recognized the man at once as the gardener who had been sent to the place soon after the Squire left it. Then we remembered that he was a Catholic, the only one in our neighbourhood up to that time.

"It's Midnight Mass," he added, "and though you mayn't be Catholics, it won't do you any harm."

In a few seconds we were all inside the chapel.

I could never make you properly understand what my first attendance at Holy Mass meant for me. In some strange way, I thought, I must have died and entered Heaven. Remember, it was the first time in my life that I had heard an organ or any singing worthy of the name.

The wonderful ceremony at the altar held me like a spell. I had no sort of notion what Mass meant, but from the moment I entered the chapel I was convinced that something very sacred was going on. Instinctively I knelt down and so did my brothers, though we did not venture very far from the entrance. Lighted candles were everywhere, but the beautiful little sanctuary was ablaze with tall tapers. The altar was decorated with what I took to be roses, but which I heard afterwards were red and white camellias. The priest seemed to be clad in a vestment of gold, and if I had been told that the altar boys in white and scarlet had been sent from Heaven for this

particular service, I should certainly have believed it, for I did not know one of them by sight.

Motionless and scarcely daring to breathe, I knelt while the choir overhead sang the *Adeste Fideles.* All my life I had known the melody; my brothers and I had sung it that very night; but as rendered by this chapel choir it was indeed a revelation. Never before had I heard such a sweet and thrilling voice as that of the boy-soprano who sang the solo verse; I had not guessed that such glorious harmonies as those of the chorus parts could be heard on earth.

I know now that the service was a Low Mass with music: to me, to all of us, it was far too brief. All the way home my brothers talked wonderingly and enthusiastically, but I scarcely opened my lips: I dared not do so lest I should burst into tears. They thought I was tired out, but I was really in a state of mild ecstasy. Harmony-haunted I fell asleep to dream of Paradise.

Before Christmas was over the news reached us that the Fitzhenrys had come to stay; instead of renting the Hall, they had bought it, and as much of the land as the old Squire could sell. We were living on our own farm, but my father always rented a few additional fields from the Squire, so that to some extent Mr. Fitzhenry now became our landlord. My father was a staunch Protestant, but my mother had long held Tractarian views, and so had my big

brothers. From that Christmas night I myself was a Catholic—in will and intention. The first to be actually received was my dear mother, and as one of my father's firmest convictions was that she could do no wrong, slowly and reluctantly he began to read and to consider the claims of the Catholic Church.

There followed an eventful year. One by one we were instructed and received—my father the last of all. But, blessed be God! by the following Christmas we were all kneeling at the altar of the Hall chapel to receive the Most Holy Sacrament at Midnight Mass.

A CHRISTMAS FAIRY STORY

ONCE upon a time there was a little girl who was very unhappy because she had no Christmas tree. The name of this little girl was Freda, and she lived in a village that stood, and still stands, near one of the biggest forests in Europe.

Now the reason why Freda had no Christmas tree was that on Christmas Eve her mother received the most beautiful of earthly gifts; and I need not say that the most beautiful gift any mother can ever receive is a little baby. But it so happened that neither Freda's mother nor any member of the family had expected this precious gift to come on the day before Christmas, and, as you know, a present of that kind cannot be wrapped up and put away in a drawer to be taken out and looked at and played with—like a doll, for instance, or a box of tin soldiers. No, a baby must be tenderly nursed, and warmly clad, and regularly fed: indeed, it requires a great deal of attention.

Freda's father quite intended to bring the Christmas tree home with him from the forest, but the un-

expected coming of that precious gift of God, the baby, had made him forgetful of almost everything else; and no wonder. Freda's big brother Hans was also so busy, what with running errands and helping to nurse the baby, that he too forgot all about the Christmas tree—for a time. But Freda could not forget that she had had a tree ever since she could remember, and as she was now eight years old, you will know just exactly for how long she could remember.

It seemed to Freda that everybody was making a great deal too much fuss about the new baby. She herself was being shamefully neglected, she thought. She wondered that her father, who was so fond of her, should seem to forget that she was in the house. Freda thought about the matter for a very long time, and at last she determined not to be a little girl any longer. No, she would be a fairy: then, no doubt, everybody would be very sorry indeed and would miss her dreadfully.

Now in the country in which Freda lived every little girl knew exactly what to do in order to become a fairy. Fortunately, they very rarely did it. Freda knew, because Hans had told her; and Hans was nearly fourteen, so that whatever he said must be true. Girls who are only eight might perhaps make mistakes: but boys of fourteen——

You had a long way to go, of course: at least to Freda it seemed a long way. And you had to be

very careful not to visit the wrong tree in the wrong part of the forest, because of course there were other creatures in the forest besides fairies. But then Freda knew the place so well. Almost every day during the past summer she had visited the fairy ring, sometimes alone, sometimes with Hans, or with her other brothers and sisters.

Down the main aisle of the forest you walked, or ran, until you came to three wild apple trees: then you turned sharply to the left and kept on until you reached a deep black pool of water. With the black water of this pool you had to fill a small vessel of some kind. Then you turned to the right and walked on until you came to a belt of pine trees. The fairy ring was in the centre of the hollow which was encircled by the pines.

The first thing you did was to touch wood and say—

> Pine-tree tall and pine-tree sweet,
> Guide my eyes and guide my feet,
> Give me shelter I entreat.

Then you had to take off your wooden shoe and leave it at the foot of the tree—it was most important to remove the right one, which, curiously enough, was the *left* one, in two senses. On the right leg you hopped to the next tree, which you touched and said "Pine-tree tall," etc., just as before. You made the circle of the trees after this fashion, and of course came round to the one you first touched and under which you had left your sabot.

Now you put on your sabot, then holding your vessel of black water in your right hand, and your right sabot in your left hand, you descended to the fairy ring. If by chance you trod on a rabbit or a hare—well, there was nothing for it but to put on your sabot and go straight home. No fairies would appear *that* day. But if you met a squirrel in the fairy ring it was a sign that the fairies were not only at home but that they were expecting you.

As soon as ever you found yourself in the fairy ring you began to sing this verse:

> Fairy Queen, Fairy Queen, open your door,
> Let in a wayfarer weary and poor;
> See how I sprinkle this green mossy floor.

You had to sprinkle one drop of the pool water at every word of the song.

It was then that things began to happen.

Freda had done all that I have mentioned, and she had done them with the greatest possible care. So of course things did happen.

Never in the whole course of her long life of eight years had she beheld a sight so brilliant or so bewildering. She had stepped into the very middle of Fairyland, and she was surrounded by thousands of fairies. But, to her amazement, not one of them took the slightest notice of her.

Of course she had shrunk to their size the moment she entered their kingdom. It soon became clear to

her that she had arrived at a very busy time. Of course it was Christmas, she could not forget that; but then she did not know that the fairies kept Christmas. The streets simply swarmed with fairies, and the hurry and bustle that was going on made Freda positively giddy. She was so jolted and hustled that she could scarcely keep her feet. Yet nobody looked at her, nobody spoke a word to her. The fairies were all laughing and talking, singing and shouting, running and dancing, playing musical instruments of every size and shape, ringing bells and beating drums, clashing cymbals and firing pistols, and, generally, behaving as though they had all gone mad with joy.

Again and again Freda tried to attract the attention of the passers-by; but she had not the smallest success. So she crept back as close to the houses as she possibly could, in order not to be in the way of the pressing and thronging crowd.

There was so much to see, so much to admire, that if only some-one would have taken her by the hand and told her what was going on she would have been entirely happy. So bright and gay were the dresses of the fairy men and women, boys and girls, that as she stood to watch the crowd go by it seemed to her as if all the flowers in the world were walking in an irregular procession. The street in which she stood was nothing less than a moving flower-garden. She noticed that many of the girls had short frocks made

of flower petals of every colour, and that the boys had hose and doublets of green and crimson and russet leaves. All were shod in sabots cut out of nut-shells.

But the ladies had clothes made of white, yellow, pink, and crimson roses, every tint that could possibly be mentioned. The air was full of the perfume of roses and carnations and violets. So strong now was the scent of violets that Freda glanced at her own little fairy frock: yes, it was made up entirely of violet leaves, and her little sabots were prettily carved filbert shells.

Freda had quite forgotten that she was leaning against the door of a big house that opened directly on to the street; but just as she began to stretch out her feet in order to admire the pretty little nut-shell shoes, the door suddenly opened from within and she fell back into the arms of a boy—who, needless to say, was in a very great hurry indeed. Yet, being a fairy-boy, and therefore very polite, he begged pardon prettily and hoped she was not hurt.

"No, I am not hurt, thank you," said Freda; "but oh, do please tell me what is the matter everywhere!"

"Matter!" he laughed, "why, you must know what has happened?"

"But I don't," she pleaded, "really and truly I don't."

"What! you mean to say you don't know that the Queen has got a little baby-boy?"

"Oh!" she exclaimed, "is that it? And is that all?"

"*All!*" cried the boy, looking as if he couldn't believe his ears. "Why, isn't it just the most lovely and beautiful thing that can ever happen to a mother?"

Freda felt too ashamed of herself to answer. But at last she said: "And is that why all the people are so—so——"

"You mean so *glad*," said the boy: "of course it is. What could possibly happen in Fairyland to make them gladder, do you think?"

"But all these people are not related to the baby," she objected. "I mean, they aren't his brothers and sisters."

The boy looked at her in a way that made her quite uncomfortable.

"I say, are you really one of our folk?" he asked suspiciously. "Or are you one of those strange earth people who sometimes find their way here?"

"I—I—I——" she stammered.

"Yes, I thought you were," he said, fingering his little green cap thoughtfully. "Well, if you take my advice, you'll go back again. There isn't any room in Fairyland for people who don't love little babies, and who don't think they are just the very sweetest things the good God ever makes. Yes, you'd better go back again. You'd never be happy here. I'll help you if you like. Just give me your two hands, will you?"

And all the time he was speaking it seemed to

Freda that his face was getting bigger and bigger, rosier and rosier, and more and more like that of her brother Hans. Yes, and surely his voice was the voice of Hans! His arms too—how long they were, and how strong! She was lying in his arms now—the kind strong arms that must be the arms of Hans. . . . Suddenly it was very dark and a voice—without doubt the voice of her brother—was saying:

"Well, Freda, it's lucky I came round here for the Christmas tree. You'd have been frozen to death, my dear, if I hadn't. How could you be so naughty? Hold tight now, I'm going to run all the way home with you. Then I'll go back for the Christmas tree."

Almost any day in the year you may hear people say: "Well, well, what a dear little nurse Freda is! How devotedly she loves her baby-brother!"

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WAR, SIN, AND SUFFERING

By the Rev. HYACINTH KOOS, O.P.

The "days are evil"; both minds and hearts are sorely troubled. Wellnigh two thousand years of Christianity have come and gone, yet Christian nations cannot, or will not, settle their differences without war. Scarcely had the "rumours of war" got abroad before the terrible reality was upon us—a war of the nations, under conditions far exceeding in horror all past wars. Why, men ask, should a few politicians and generals have power to plunge the world into such misery? And turning to the thought of God all-powerful they ask (some in sorrowing wonder, some in bitter distrust), "Why does He not prevent all this, if all power is in His hands? How can such suffering and sin be allowed by a God, just, merciful, loving?"

The "evil" which belongs essentially to our finite condition, *i.e.* the thwarting and checking of our natural impulses towards self-development in various ways, necessitated by the fact that we are bound by our Creator's laws and must also take account of the rights of those around us—this we can see to be reconcilable with God's wisdom and goodness. But sin, which is the moral evil of rebellion against

God, and suffering (both mental and physical, temporal and eternal), which in one way or another is the consequence of sin—how can the All Wise and the All Powerful tolerate these?

Let us think this over. A difficulty, a problem, we know it to be. Can it, nevertheless, be explained? If not, why not? And if it cannot be fully understood, what reasons can a believing soul place before itself, to strengthen faith in God's goodness, to afford comfort in this hour of national peril and sorrow?

I. No Complete Solution of the Mystery.

(*a*) *Man's knowledge limited.*

Genius and learning, nourished on the knowledge of all past ages, are still but at the gateways of the fields of science which time and further study will gradually open out. Men specialize to advance the more rapidly, they become master-minds in their chosen branch of study, only to realize more and more how little they know, how much is still unknown. Even the visible world, they confess, is a world of numberless mysteries. What the great powers of Nature can do we are steadily discovering; what these powers are we know as little about as did the wise men of ages past. We hide our ignorance under words and phrases which sometimes almost make us believe that we really know. Nevertheless, mysteries they remain, beyond the power of the human mind to penetrate. How, therefore, can it be that the infinite God, who made

this world of mysteries, should Himself be other than a mystery—a "hidden God"? To pretend to judge Him exhaustively is to misjudge.

(*b*) *Man's judgements of men impeded by passion.*

How seriously the elements of evil affect our minds, the judgements we pass on our fellow-men make manifest. The wisest and most prudent of men learn no more useful lesson than this—to distrust their own judgements of the lives and actions of their neighbour. Experience has brought home to them how exceeding difficult it is to understand others; how easy to misjudge—to see evil in good actions; to fancy evil actions good. Ignorance of facts or of motives, prejudice, pride, dislike, selfishness, every miserable human weakness can darken and pervert the mind, and make its decisions worthless. "Man" (Holy Scripture warns us) "is prone to evil from his youth." Nowhere is this proneness seen in a stronger light than in our tendency to judge others unfavourably. Let us ask ourselves, "How often have we thought too well of anybody?" The answer will humble our pride, and do much to save us from the temptation of judging our fellow-men, still more of misjudging our God.

(*c*) *So too his judgements of God.*

These same vicious elements, in the minds of many men, distort their conceptions of God. Imagination, passion, the evil influences of sin, most strongly affect the mind, even when the most sacred interests are at stake. The three hundred (and more) existing

Christian sects are an illustration of this. Multitudes believe what they wish to believe : their wish to believe is brought about by the conditions of early training and teaching, modified by personal temperament, inclination, prejudice. Our Lord's desire, clearly, was for "one faith" ; the multiplicity is not according to His will, but against it—the work of man, the unreliable results of the untrustworthy judgements of essentially unstable minds. Man has never been ready to acknowledge this. Our Lord came to His chosen people ; they rejected Him : "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." They did not believe in Him ; they thought Him an impostor, "one having a devil." They were not free from blame ; theirs was not "invincible ignorance," even though they may really have thought Him an impostor. Their darkness of mind was blamable, for it was due to sin. As our Lord tells us : "men loved the darkness rather than the light, *because their works were evil*." Men in every age are to be found who declare they do not believe in God, or in His goodness. Some, it may be, really mean this. More would disbelieve, if they could. The wish too often is father to such thoughts. Men still "love the darkness" and dread the light of truth. A vicious life, nay, even an ordinarily worldly life, can so darken the mind and deaden the heart that men almost wish there were no God to claim their love and service—no God of dread power, whose hand, in justice, is "stretched out still." "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they

shall see God." The fulness and the clearness with which the soul can see God will be in proportion to the possession of such purity.

(*d*) *God can be comprehended only by Himself.*

The mind's innate weakness, darkened by sin and passion, is then a bar to the fuller knowing of God; but it may be added that anything approaching to fulness of knowledge is absolutely impossible to a created mind. The Infinite can be fully known only by the Infinite. A being who could be fully understood even by the highest created mind, would be, like that mind, limited, and thus himself a creature. Above that being would be *his* Creator—unlimited, infinite in all good qualities, and therefore not completely knowable, a mystery both in His nature and in his actions, a "hidden God," "dwelling in light inaccessible." Holy Writ tells us "No man hath seen God at any time" (1 John x.). The Son of God warned us against judging His actions by any human standard: "My ways are not as your ways." Our highest and best ideas, unless founded on His actual revelation, are folly in relation to Him. "The wisdom of this world is folly with God" (1 Cor. iii. 19). "How incomprehensible are His judgements, how unsearchable His ways" (Rom. xi. 33).

God has ever been misunderstood. Foolish and mad pride of intellect was the ruin of the fallen angels; it is the spiritual ruin of multitudes of men. The fundamental doctrine of the gospel—redemption through the Cross—"was to the Jews a stumbling-

block, to the Gentiles foolishness." To-day, when war covers the world with the shadow of the Cross, many still find that doctrine a "stumbling-block"; some would think it "folly." That "God should so love the world as to send His only-begotten Son," men readily believe—the love in that is manifest. But when God offers to them that which He gave to His "well-beloved Son"—the Cross—they see neither His justice, His mercy, nor His love. "Whom the Lord loveth, He chastiseth." "He spared not even His own Son" because of the greatness of the love with which He loved us. A mystery, indeed!

(*e*) *The Confidence due from creature to Creator.*

God's greatest natural gifts to us are mind, heart, will. They are meant to be exercised in His service, to be used in submission to His holy will. Of all supernatural virtues three are pre-eminent—Faith, Hope, Charity. By means of these man pays to His Maker the allegiance due to Him and ennobles his own human faculties. By consent of the will the mind and heart exercise belief and trust and love, according to the devotion of each. At Baptism God infuses these three virtues into the soul; during life He strengthens them by actual graces, enabling us to exercise and develop them. His very love for us, therefore, would lead Him to veil His nature and operations in mystery, in order that faith and hope and charity may have the more scope for development. If virtue is not tried we cannot be sure of its quality. So God tries our faith, our confidence,

our love, that He may reward the self-determination which moves us lovingly to believe and trust in Him. There are men who say they will believe only what they understand. Such men know little of the limitations of human knowledge ; they understand less about God's claims on their faith and trust ; they are ignorant of the real nature of belief, whether human or divine. To believe is not to *see* a truth, but to *consent* to accept it, on the authority of a credible witness, although that truth in itself be not understood. All men do this in the most important human affairs. The world would be in a state of chaos if men did not believe and trust their fellow-men. Divine faith means that the mind consents to a truth which God teaches, because God teaches it, however mysterious that truth may remain. How and where His divine voice can be heard, God, by His holy light, will help men to discover ; by humble, earnest prayer if, eager for truth, they crave for light. Man must believe if he would be saved : " he that will not believe shall be condemned." He must believe in God, believe in His goodness, His unfailing justice, His mercy, and His love. This obligation is final and absolute : neither human weakness nor pride nor selfishness must darken our mind, lest in the hour of trial doubt be allowed to become a danger.

God also demands that we trust, and place confidence in, His goodness even when His love is veiled in clouds. We must learn that the infliction of pain and sorrow is no evidence of want of love. Parents punish their children, yet no child, except

perhaps in the heat of passion, doubts their affection. It is, in fact, the indulgent parent that fails in love, as spoiled children frequently realize in later life.

II. Why Suffering is Permitted.

(*a*) *Suffering—a punishment of sin.*

God has placed us here, with a purpose supremely good and wise. What is that purpose? It is that our good will may be tested, that we may prove that we prefer supernatural good, revealed to us by faith, to whatever natural goods the world has to offer us, and so show ourselves not unworthy of eternal companionship with Him. Are we content to seek Him and His justice, or shall we persist in seeking self? If we live for Him here, hereafter we shall live with Him eternally, unutterably happy and blessed. If we live here, not for Him but for the narrow, temporal interests of self, we outrage His divine majesty, we reject His just claims, we rebel against His law and commandment: all this by misusing, ungratefully, the good qualities of body and of soul with which He has endowed us.

It is only in the light of faith that we can realize what exactly is involved in our resisting the divine purpose. Faith, then, teaches us that the sinner, by rebellion, defiles the temple of the Holy Spirit (his soul); he contemns and tramples under foot the Precious Blood of his Divine Redeemer. Such conduct surely merits punishment. Just as, if God did not reward good-living, it might be said that virtue was not encouraged, so, if God did not punish

sin, the inference might be that evil was of no account. Even the pagan philosopher knew that the worst evil that could befall the wicked man would be to escape the penalty of his misdeeds. Accordingly, it is in love and mercy that God strikes the sinner, who, by suffering, both makes some compensation to the outraged justice of God, and at the same time is excited to repentance and amendment. Divine retribution is thus made manifest, and deters others from the paths of sin.

It is illuminating to note how God chastizes sin. Sometimes He Himself directly punishes the sinner; but oftentimes He stands aside and allows the sinner to punish himself. Suffering is frequently the direct and natural consequence of sin. Drunkenness, immorality, avarice, ambition, pride, passionate temper, uncharitableness, hatred, and many other forms of sin, often injure more or less seriously the powers of body and the qualities of mind, heart, and will. They therefore not uncommonly bring upon the sinner a greater or lesser measure of bodily pain and weakness, weariness and depression, quite apart from their external consequences. In regard to sins of sensuality, the hospitals, lunatic asylums, poor-law institutions, the many desolate homes illustrate, with terrible reality, the teaching of Holy Writ, "What things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. For he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption." Yet the pain and misery which justly follow on sin are sent by God in mercy

and in love, "Whom the Lord loveth He chastizeth." He strikes the sinner now or hereafter, on this or on the other side of the grave. He strikes here that in eternity He may spare. He gives here the Cross of suffering and sorrow, that there He may give the Crown, and "may wipe all tears from their eyes" when "death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more." The carnal-minded souls steeped in merely natural, material, selfish ideas, neither understand nor value suffering. Spiritual men have eyes to see the love in their Father's face in the hour when, even in punishment, His hand is heavy upon them. Growth in knowledge of spiritual things almost insensibly leavens the soul, and enkindles a desire, not to shrink from suffering, but to welcome it as a "pearl beyond price." The prayer of the Saints, the wise men of God, has ever been that of St. Augustine, "Here cut, here burn—so that in eternity Thou mayest spare."

(*b*) *Life—a probation; suffering—God's way of "proving."*

"As silver is tried by fire, and gold in the furnace, so the Lord trieth the hearts" (Prov. xvii. 4). Life and the world are God's appointed time and place of our probation. No quality within us, no condition of life outside us, has any other purpose. We and they are the raw material out of which and in which God does His holy and blessed work. "We have not here a lasting city, but seek one which is to come." We are but strangers and pilgrims passing

through this world to the home of our eternity. All that holds us back or draws us away from our onward path becomes to us an evil. Nothing is evil which God uses to help us along our way; all such things are blessings. But by want of thought, or wilfulness, we may turn His blessings into evils—render them hurtful to our souls. Nevertheless, in themselves they are meant to be, and are, blessings. Good food is not poison . . . poison, nevertheless, kills fewer than good food, but the food is not to blame. Health, therefore prosperity, comfort, happiness, peace, become to us blessings only in the measure in which they are used to advance our eternal welfare. Sickness and pain, on the contrary—poverty, discomfort, troubles, sorrows, misery—are not evils unless we make them such. They can be, and by the spiritual-minded are, transformed, by God's help, into blessing beyond all price. All depends upon the point of view; whether or not we have the good will to recognize and value God's purpose in them. We can, as many do, blind ourselves to this truth, resent or repine against God's benevolent designs, because the blessings are not at once seen to be such. It is weak, childish, unworthy—in its results often fatal—that man should turn away from God, through that by means of which He wills to draw them closely to Himself.

(*c*) *Suffering detaches the heart from creatures.*

The constant refrain of our Lord's teaching is "what doth it profit?"—the worthlessness of all

that life can give in comparison with the soul's eternal well-being. We shall live for ever, but where? under what conditions? No other thing matters: nevertheless multitudes live as if there were no eternity. Sin, men must acknowledge, is mad bartering of self, for pleasure so fleeting that it is hardly enjoyed before it has gone. How is it possible so to live? The mind can be so distracted and drawn away by all that the heart loves, that it has not time to think deeply of spiritual truths, and so make them a power. Every bodily sense, every quality of our souls, has its own special kind of gratification. These respond spontaneously to the presence of their appropriate objects and thus concupiscence and curiosity are aroused. If an unceasing succession of things pleasing and desirable is presented to the mind and the heart, these are liable to be so engrossed as to be unable to attend to better things. An effort, sometimes a great one, is needed to realize strongly and so appreciate the value of spiritual things. It is so easy *not* to make effort, to float with the current, to see and enjoy the pleasant things of a pleasing world.

On the first Christmas night, we are told, there was "no room" for the world's Saviour. The Evangelist does not suggest that the people of Bethlehem would have refused Him entrance if there had been room, but so many people were there that there was none. Room could only have been made by turning others out. The world to-day lives under like conditions. Most of those who are not

religious, and multitudes who are supposed to be religious, do not deliberately and in malice turn from God. They simply have "no room," or but little room, for Him in hearts so fully occupied, in days so fully employed. They live within the narrow circle of their own little world of pleasure or business. So many interests crowd the mind, so many desires strongly appeal to the heart, that there is truly "no room," or only the smallest and poorest corner for Him. As age grows upon us, a change begins—why? The senses grow dull, the passions die down, the desires become weaker, the heart and the mind are made freer—for God. Suffering produces the same result far more rapidly, surely, and fully. It frees the heart for God in a degree that nothing else can. A child playing thoughtlessly is caught in the briers. Thorns hold her in every way. She must be set free with a gentle yet strong hand. One by one the thorns are drawn with pain from quivering flesh, until at last, bloodstained and wounded, she is released. So through suffering God sets free our hearts from the desires which hold us in bondage. Do we not see this in the lives of others; have we not experienced it in our own?—this strange manner in which the desires change, as the heart is bowed down under sickness, pain, or sorrow. Men, who in health and strength feel as if they could not take interest in God and the unseen things, find under the shadow of the Cross new longings grow within them. Old pleasures become dead sea fruit, bitter to the taste,

ashes in the mouth, unsatisfying, wearying. Eternity seems nearer, far more real—a thing at first to dread for all that it may bring; later—something to desire, even to long for—and that for the same reason. Suffering is the alchemist, turning all things into gold. Only those who are brought in frequent contact with the suffering can form any adequate idea of the number who are drawn from sin by pain and sorrow. The unfailing love of suffering evidenced in the lives of God's saints is due not only to their desire to become like unto the Crucified One, but also to their strong realization of the power sorrow and suffering have to draw the heart from inordinate earthly desires, and so set it free for God.

(*d*) *Suffering develops virtue.*

Of this the effects of war afford a striking illustration. What heroic patience, endurance, indomitable courage, magnificent self-sacrifice are we not witnessing? Hundreds of thousands are moved by the sight to offer themselves to like trials; young men, most of them, from comfortable homes; accustomed to a life of few bodily hardships and of no great stress or strain. Their trials begin before the foe is faced. For long periods they have to be content with inadequate preparations for their new life and work, crowded together into roughly provided quarters; thousands under canvas during autumn storms. Then in the actual fighting line—on sea or land—which of us can realize

the mental strain, the bodily endurance needed for daily life at such a season, in such a crisis, by the men and boys on our submarines and warships? The daily life in the trenches, in the cold and stormy season of the year; the carnage and horrors of the battlefield—we, in comfortable homes, cannot fully realize the manly and even heroic qualities needed for such a life. Yet month after month passes, and every day witnesses the same unconquerable bravery, untiring endurance, grand self-sacrifice. Suffering, then, nobly borne, stirs others to emulation. The one question is, "How can we be of use, how share in the common danger, how help to bear the Empire's burden?" Who can say that in the minds of untold millions the thought of duty, which implicitly at least connotes the thought of God, is not one of the great mainsprings of this stupendous energy and sacrifice—that natural motives alone are at work, that the supernatural is lost sight of? It is in such crises of the world's history that the supernatural reasserts its claim, and more universally exercises its influence. Even if some, through fault of early training, or through later weakness and sin, forget or neglect God and do noble deeds from less noble because merely human motives, He is both the God of nature and the God of grace, and will not be outdone in generosity by those who use His natural gifts well. May we not confidently trust that He will bless the men who sacrifice for King and country all that life holds dear, with graces even supernatural out of

His own most generous love—that in mercy He will open their eyes to see and to know their God; to realize that love of country is a duty both human and divine, and a following of His law?

(*e*) *Suffering especially calls forth charity.*

The horrors and atrocities of the war! Of these numberless rumours are flying around, told by word of mouth, recorded by the press. From the very nature of the war, the kind of weapons, the size of contending forces, never before has there been known such ruin, such suffering, such widespread misery; and never in the world's history has there been such an outburst of compassion, and of charity so generous, so universal, so magnificently practical. "Love ye one another and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ"; "Bear ye one another's burdens." It is the voice of the eternal God, the God of charity; a voice at ordinary times "of one crying in the wilderness," by few even heard, by fewer obeyed. God, in love and pity for the human race, allows one nation to be stricken—its cities, towns, villages are in ruins, its people in poverty and desolation exiled from their homes, and dispersed amongst the nations.

What happens? The world awakes from sleep, springs to its feet, and a great cry of compassion and sorrow is heard above the noisy din of war. Families who have lost one home are offered a thousand; people deprived of all worldly goods have every kind of gift necessary, useful and even useless,

lavished upon them. Men find some comfort if only they can be allowed to *give*. "Do what we will, we can never make up to them for all they have done, for all they have suffered, for all they have lost." True, indeed; the world with all its generosity cannot; God can, and will: a hundredfold, a thousandfold shall be given to them. He has led them, as He led the Son of His love, along the rugged way of the Cross to their Calvary. He will lead them, as He led His Son, to Thabor—the mount of joy and glory. And the charity which has helped them, God will not forget. Many of us may live to see how He has waited and watched as the good work was done, waited for the hour appointed to shower His precious gifts upon all who in Christian love have helped His suffering children. "As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me." The world's kind treatment of the Belgian refugees, although the repayment of a debt, is written as an eternal record in the loving heart of God, so generously has it been paid.

III. The Mystery of Sin.

The value of suffering, the blessings which flow from it, can be in large measure understood. Why God tolerates sin is a mystery—a matter to exercise faith rather than to satisfy knowledge. Yet there are reasons which strengthen faith in God's goodness, and console us now when sinful pride and the jealousy of nations have plunged the world in ruin, death, and sorrow.

But, first, let us recognize that God, at every moment of every hour, is preventing endless sin, guarding the weak from numberless strong temptations, strengthening their hearts by His light and graces. We are prone to evil; we little realize how strongly every human faculty would be dragged downwards, did not God in mercy save us from ourselves. The sins men commit can be known! The sins of which they would have been guilty, had not God helped them, we cannot discover. Do we realize the full significance of our Lord's teaching—"No man can come to Me, unless the Father draw him"; "Without Me, you can do nothing"? St. Paul expresses the complementary truth: "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me"; also he further shows that even our good will is a divine gift. "It is God who worketh in us to will, and to accomplish according to His will." All this is little understood—otherwise in God's service both self-complacent pride, and its contrary, discouragement, lack of confidence, would be rare.

But now, let us take some of the reasons why God does not go farther, and make all sin impossible.

(*a*) *No test unless possibility of failing.*

Our will is free, in the full sense of that word. God has left man in the hands of his own counsel. Action is often barred, but man can choose, or not choose, as he wills. It is this which gives to human nature its essential greatness and dignity. If God had withheld from us this, our highest privilege,

we should have been at best a superior kind of animal—superior, however, only in certain respects, for in strength, beauty, grace, and many other qualities some animals are superior to man. We, however, possess free will. All creatures must render to their Creator submission and service according to their order of nature. Animals carry out their Maker's will by *instinct*, their guiding power; man and angels endowed with free will must *freely* serve Him. His dignity and ours—both make this an absolute necessity. Without free will there could be no virtue, no holiness on earth. What gives its merit to well-doing is that it might have been replaced by evil-doing. The creature freely chooses good rather than evil. The Church praises the Saint because "he could have transgressed, and did not transgress; could have done evil, and did it not." Supernatural virtue and holiness gives men facility, from motives of God's fear or love, in controlling their passions and evil inclinations, and bending their will in submission to the will of God. Yet at the same time they are free, if they will, to gratify their passions, and resist God's law. God gives grace; we can and oftentimes do refuse it, or only half use it. Our lives, then, are holy or not, because we use our freedom to do good or evil. We are not mere machines; mere registers of God's power and will. In love, He made us thus—only "a little lower than the angels," to serve Him, as in the hour of trial the good angels did—freely. In our freedom, He, by His graces,

helps us to live holily. If we fail He helps us to amendment. In our worst sins we never find Mercy deaf to our repentant cry.

Note, however, that freedom to think or do wrong is not an essential quality of perfect liberty. If that were so God Himself would not be free. Doing wrong is doing something which is against reason and against our real interests. Liability to do wrong is, therefore, a weakness, an imperfection, making for the ruin of our nature and indicating that we are in bondage to irrational impulses. We do not become really free till we have by virtuous habits strengthened our minds and wills against evil and delusion.

(*b*) *Sins which hurt others—why are not* they *prevented?*

The horrors and atrocities of war suggest this question. But the occasion of it dates from Paradise. What sinners have been a source of greater misery and of sin to others than were our first parents? If to prevent their sin God had cut them off before they fell, the question would have recurred with each of their descendants. God would thus have been placed unwarrantably in bondage to His creatures—bound, that is, to remove them from life whenever they showed any signs of intending to transgress. The Divine Wisdom found a higher and nobler way. He would let evil work out its full consequences and yet fail to defeat His purposes. He Himself would meet and conquer sin by suffer-

ing. Thus the Fall brought the Redeemer [1]—the record of that gracious life which so wonderfully reveals God's wonderful love. If Divine Wisdom had not chosen this plan, how immense would have been our loss! The endless chain of divine mercies and graces drawing sinners out of the depths of their iniquity would have never been used. We should not have known the Man of Sorrows. Mary, the immaculate mother of our Lord, and all those Saints who have striven best to imitate His virtues, would have had no opportunity of exhibiting the creature's perfection. Who can think of all this, and wish that God should have prevented all sin in the only way sin can be prevented, *i.e.*, by a constant miraculous interference with the working out of His own laws in response to His creatures' perversity?

(*c*) *To prevent evil means to prevent greater good.*

Amongst the ancestors of our Lord Himself are two women whom Holy Writ describes as "sinners." Thus from unholy parents may spring holy children; to destroy the sinful would mean to deny existence to the good.

Thus, to cut off the sinner and so prevent his sin would deprive the world of all the blessings natural and supernatural which divine Wisdom knows how to draw from evil, and diminish the glory such providential dealing procures for the divine majesty. If, for instance, God had slain those responsible for this war before they effected their evil purpose, God

[1] We are aware, of course, of the Scotist theory that God the Son would have become incarnate even if Adam had not fallen.

and the human race would have been deprived of all the good the war has done and will do. The revival of religion, the universal self-sacrifice, the glorious outpouring of sympathy on suffering Belgium, would never have been; and countless sinners, great and small, would be without the graces war has brought within their reach. Many might have been lost in peace, who in the trenches, on the field of battle, under the battered walls of their ruined homes have been chastened, purified, sanctified. All the sin which now is receiving its due punishment by such sufferings, would, perhaps, have to be reserved for punishment, more vigorous, beyond the grave.

War is a time of horror, a period of awful sin—we know it. It causes untold evil, and so no human mind should dogmatize about its advantages. God alone knows on which side the balance lies. But even our feeble vision can see some of its benefits. One supreme advantage it has—it makes even the giddy serious, even the thoughtless thoughtful. Very many to-day, as always, are vicious, or irreligious, or cold in God's service, because at ordinary times they will not think, will not face the eternal truths. Great calamities force multitudes to consider these truths—and so become occasions of salvation to thousands who otherwise might be lost.

(*d*) *Sin as well as suffering an occasion of sanctity.* Of truths which give us comfort this is by no means the least consoling—that God, through our very sins, draws us to Himself. The Magdalen at the feet of Christ was a sinner, a type of the sinners

who have received God's mercies, not only in the hour of their degradation, but (understood in a true sense) on occasion of their sins, "Many sins are forgiven her because she has loved much." She "loved much" because her excessive sinfulness brought into greater prominence the wonder of God's pitying love for her.

St. Peter, the first of the Apostles, was generous and simple-hearted ; yet cowardice and its seeming contrary, self-confidence, were curiously combined in his character. What more beautiful than to read in the pages of the Scriptures, how by occasion of these very faults God raised him to sanctity. Through them, step by step, He humbled the Apostle, until by his last serious fall (the denying of his Master) he was made fully to understand his own worthlessness, and so became a fit subject for sanctification.

St. Paul was of a very different character. Strong, forceful, hard, even cruel, fanatical pride, his besetting passion, made him "a Pharisee of the Pharisees." He stood by to see Stephen, the first Christian martyr, die ; later, he pushed his way into power and became the most bitter enemy of the newly born Church. Yet of this man God made an Apostle, who "laboured more than all the Apostles," a saint, a mystic, whose example and inspired writings have been a source of consolation and strength to saint and sinner in every age, and to sinners in a most special manner. They see a man who all but ruins his life by indulgence

in a perverted zeal and disregard for the rights of conscience, an inveterate bigot, suddenly changed by a miracle of divine mercy, and all his energy of character made the instrument of his purification and sanctification.

All can produce good fruit from good seed. God alone in loving mercy creates good out of evil ; can take occasion, out of the very sins of the wicked, to call forth more wonderful exhibitions of repentant love.

It is an instinct of the human mind to hold that all wrong will be righted ; all sin have to make full compensation. Justice must be finally triumphant. In God, justice, mercy, love are united in the unity of the Divine Nature. One is never found save where the others are also present—even though they be hidden. God has given to the world the Cross, which He gave to His Son. In the Cross is justice —yet is it the pledge of mercy and love. Our Lord goes before us carrying His cross. "If any man will be My disciple, let him take up his cross and follow Me." "If you suffer with Me, you shall also reign with Me." Have *we* the good will which makes it possible to understand that truth ? Have we the spiritual wisdom which makes it easy to appreciate it ? If so—thanks be to God. It is a grace beyond price. Many are the sad things in this sinful world. Is anything more sad than this, that the world *does* not, because it *will* not, see in their true light the lessons taught by the Crucified and the Gospel of His Cross ?

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SOME CHILDREN OF ST. DOMINIC

By MARIE ST. S. ELLERKER, Tertiary O.S.D.

Foreword

This paper was written at the request of and in answer to the questions of a young American friend, but many of those interested in the Tertiary movement in this country have felt that it might answer a wider purpose. The Tertiary life, were it only better known, would make a very direct appeal to the age in which we live.

The feminist movement, whether we approve or disapprove of it, has unquestionably placed women in a large number of positions from which they were formerly shut out—positions in public life, not necessarily all connected with charity. There must be many women filling such positions, desirous of continuing the work they have undertaken, and yet with an earnest wish to consecrate themselves and their work to God.

The steady stream of converts must bring into the Church many who receive the further grace of a call to devote their lives to the service of God and of souls, and who are yet debarred from ordinary religious life by age or circumstances. The grace of faith, which converts have themselves received, makes them naturally eager to apply themselves to the work of the Reunion of Christendom. There is no organized body of English-speaking women willing to devote themselves to this object. It is a field in which Dominicans, by virtue of their foundation, have a special right to work. Existing Congregations when

approached have thought that the kind of work involved—going to distant places alone, sleeping where lodgings could be found, and much else—would be unsuited to nuns: there is thus no existing Congregation of Religious Women ready to go anywhere at the call of our priests, especially our Missionary Fathers, doing whatever work they may be asked to undertake for the good of souls, and yet making no secret of their consecration to God.

Some women have tried to live a life given up to good works, and have felt after a time the need of more for their own souls: some have been discouraged by the want of continuity which is the ruin of so many good works. To these and to many others the attempt which is being made at Corpus Christi House will be full of interest, for it is an attempt to meet new wants in a new way—a way, nevertheless, which has its roots firmly fixed in the thirteenth century.

I.—Foundation

Corpus Christi House had a first nebulous beginning when on the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, 1908, the Right Rev. Dr. Brindle, Bishop of Nottingham, accepted a Dominican Tertiary to work in his diocese, and authorized her to attempt the formation of a band of Dominican Tertiaries dedicated in a special manner to the Blessed Sacrament, who would labour for the reunion of Christendom amongst Catholics, good, bad, and indifferent, and also amongst those outside the Church's Fold.

It became a little less nebulous on the octave day of Our Lady's Assumption, when at the bidding of his Lordship the first Tertiary came to Leicester. The Bishop thought the town offered a very favourable

field for work amongst non-Catholics and lapsed Catholics. Leicester had no Catholic secondary school, and his first request was for this, as he considered non-Catholic education a fruitful source of leakage.

A house had been taken temporarily in the parish of the Dominican Fathers, and one pupil had been entered as a boarder, but it was not possible to realize the hopes of the Bishop at once. The difficulties of the beginning seemed, humanly speaking, insurmountable, and four ladies who had proposed joining in the work withdrew their names. In those dark days the idea of a house of Tertiaries seemed unrealizable ; that it was not given up was due to the kindness of a number of persons—to the Bishop, who gave not only encouragement but financial support, and amongst others to the Bishop of Northampton, the Right Rev. Dr. Keating, and to the Mother-General of the Sisters of Charity of St. Paul, whose motherly kindness and solicitude knew no bounds. On the spot there had been many difficulties which at first made it impossible for the parish priest, Father Vincent McNabb, O.P., then Prior of Holy Cross, Leicester, to advance the work, but he had given what was even more indispensable, spiritual help and courage to face the difficulties. When these had been cleared away, he helped the work in every possible and seemingly impossible way and with unstinted self-sacrifice. For six years he was the soul of a body which without him must have died a speedy death. To him we owe our religious training ; in short, our debt of gratitude will leave us for ever insolvent where he is concerned. Father McNabb introduced a second Tertiary, who decided to coöperate in realizing the work, which at that moment seemed on the point of abandonment. It was God's hour.

The decision came by telegram on the Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin. Our Lady's protection seemed visible in those days; one felt it was not for nothing that the Order boasted that the scapular, "the most distinguished part of our Dominican habit," was the "Mother's pledge from heaven of the love of the most Blessed Virgin Mary towards us."

A house was now taken permanently, and with the permission of the Prior a school was organized and formally opened by the Bishop in January 1909. We wished our house to bear a name which would tell to all that it was dedicated to Jesus in His Sacrament of Love. Various suggestions were made, when one came which seemed to us perfect: it was to be Corpus Christi House.

Then all kinds of interesting things were discovered. In pre-Reformation days the most important guild in Leicester, to which the Mayor and Corporation belonged, was the Corpus Christi Guild. The old Guildhall is one of the town's ancient buildings, and in one of the windows, made up of a patchwork of bits of old stained glass, can be seen the chalice and Host, a modified form of the badge of the old guild. In a book this was found intact and carefully copied. The badge bears not only the Host and chalice, but also the five wounds of Christ. The motto "Ego sum panis vitæ" was added.

In November 1913 we moved into a house adjoining the Priory Church and belonging to the Dominican Fathers, and we are still there. We now occupy the site destined for the new church, so that when we leave we hope it will be to give place to a building which will be, in a far grander and truer sense, Corpus Christi House.

From the beginning the Tertiaries were very desirous

of doing nothing without the permission and approval of superiors. Besides that of the Bishop, they obtained that of the Very Rev. John Procter, then Provincial of the Order in England, and after his death that of his successor, the Very Rev. Humbert Everest. In December 1911 we were recommended by Father McNabb to the protection of our Very Rev. Father-General, who sent us two letters of blessing and encouragement.

In December 1912, through the kindness of the late Père Clérissac and the Princess Cassano, an account of our life and aims in Italian was placed before Pope Pius X, who sent us his blessing and encouraged us to persevere.

II.—Aim and Spirit

When we were asked by our Father-General to draw up and send to him an account of our aims, we discussed at length the question of finding some short phrase which would best describe us and our activities. As we were Dominicans we had the words of the Constitutions as to the end for which our holy Father had instituted his Order—"the salvation of souls": but since we were attempting something which placed us outside the already existing Congregations of the Third Order in England, we wished to make quite clear what this differentiation was, and we decided unanimously that the phrase "to devote ourselves to working for the reunion of Christendom" exactly expressed the object for which we were banded together. It was our determination to refuse no work which might be needed and which we were asked by authority to undertake, if this work conduced to the end we had in view. Of the actual work which has been undertaken I will speak later. It is, then, the aim

of our little band of Tertiaries to do all that lies in their power towards furthering the cause of reunion, and to avoid any word which could put an obstacle in the way or embitter the struggle.

Our holy Father St. Dominic had from the beginning furnished his children with the means they were to employ for their own sanctification and that of others, "regular life, monastic observances, and the solemn recitation of the Divine Office." These have been adopted by us. As far as is possible for women, we desire to follow the same constitutions as the Dominican Fathers. These constitutions are living, and may be added to or changed according to the needs of the time, by properly constituted authority. It is this which makes the ancient Order of St. Dominic the most modern of all institutions.

I need not apologize if here I use, instead of my own words, those of Father Bede Jarrett, O.P., who says, speaking of the General Chapters: "They have the power to modify the rules and Constitutions, relaxing on some points, and growing on others more severe. Thus as centuries pass and men's manners and customs change, so the disciplinary regulations must also be continually in need of adaptation. The spirit must abide continuously, but its outward expression will follow the same successive course that attends the gradual development of a living language." Lest, however, legislation should become too hasty, the rule, as it now stands, enjoins that any new constitution holds good from one Chapter till the next. If it is again passed, it continues in force till the third Chapter. If for the third time it is agreed to, it finally becomes part of the Constitution. It can only be abrogated in the same way.[1]

[1] *The Dominican Order.* C.T.S., 1d.

In one of our first retreats Father McNabb placed before us clearly that our first charity to our neighbour was our own sanctification. In the little book just quoted Father Bede Jarrett has many striking passages on the characteristics of Dominican sanctity. Speaking of the Saints of the Order, he says : "If we must needs find some common principle of perfection in these so distinct patterns of holiness, we should say that they are all wonderfully natural in their goodness. There is no artificial attempt to form themselves on particular lines, to discipline their souls by particular methods of prayer, to follow any one book on the soul's development. It is all perfectly spontaneous, like a plant breaking into blossom."

The spirit by which we ought to be animated is of course the spirit of St. Dominic : this is the ideal at which we must aim. We are told : "The spirit which our holy Father wished to instil among his children was first and foremost an intense worship of truth. This was, moreover, to be combined with the strict practice of monastic life. No doubt all religious orders of his time were necessarily monastic, but for St. Dominic the contemplative side of life was in itself essential. But more than this, he noticed how the peculiar force of the Albigensian heretics was drawn from the fact that they were led by men of intense personal austerity. He was determined to have the same influence and by the same means. Hence for an order whose set purpose was the exhausting pursuit of truth, he added intentionally the further burdens of severe physical mortifications, the total abstinence, the long fast from September to Holy Saturday, the continual silence. They were all deliberately chosen to give a tone of

asceticism. Even the question of poverty appeared to St. Dominic merely in the light of personal austerity. Yet this whole cycle of monastic observance was but the means to encourage and ensure the attainment of truth. Its usefulness depended absolutely on the help it gave to a life of study. The Dominican spirit is, therefore, definitely one which is always pursuing truth, human and divine, by means of study and austerity. It is the intellectual ideal, reached by the double path of knowledge and ascetism."

It will be acknowledged that this ideal set before his children by our holy Father is a noble one and well worth striving after. There is no work which might not seek a worthy inspiration from such a spirit. The following is an account of the works which have already been undertaken, and have not been found incompatible with our life as Dominican Tertiaries.

III.—Work

The Order of St. Dominic was, as a Dominican boasted in 1260, the first religious order founded expressly for the cultivation of knowledge, for the prosecution of study. Its spirit then is eminently intellectual, for it has appeared to the children of St. Dominic that the reason no less than the heart was made for God and can find no rest until it rest in Him. To secure this has been, says Cardinal Newman, their "magnificent aim." They have never despised or despaired of human knowledge.

The School.

This being so, it is natural that this account should begin with the school and with study. The Tertiaries are encouraged to give time to study in order to fit themselves for the other work they may be called upon

to do, whether it be that of instructing converts, social work, or teaching in the school. This is the spirit of St. Dominic, who gave to his children all the advantages of learning which the thirteenth century possessed.

The work of teaching was the first definite undertaking entrusted to us as a community. A school had been asked for by the Bishop and was opened by him in January 1909. Of it Father McNabb wrote in April 1914 : "Because a Catholic secondary school was lacking to the town, you undertook to begin and carry out a secondary school, which has grown and consolidated in spite of overwhelming difficulties." We have the consolation of knowing that it has kept a number of children out of non-Catholic schools. It was our great desire to have a school in which the children would gain a true Dominican reverence for learning and from which they would pass on to the Universities. We wished also to give them a high idea of their duties as citizens, and some knowledge of the social needs calling for Catholic workers in the world they would so soon enter. Local circumstances and especially the custom of withdrawing the children from school at a very early age have made such a course in citizenship impracticable here and now, but it still has its place in our plan, and some day we hope to see, if not in Leicester then elsewhere, a Corpus Christi School carrying out this scheme in its entirety.

Missions.

Another field of work lies in the instruction of those who are outside the Fold.

Of this work Father McNabb, in the letter which has just been quoted, mentions one branch of particular interest—the Motor Missions. He says : "A charac-

teristic item of your work has been in connection with the Motor Missions. Indeed, this kind of work is almost more in consonance with your ideal than any other, and has been found of great value by the missioners."

In the first brief outline of the work offered to the Bishop for his consideration had been a suggestion that the proposed community of Tertiaries should hold themselves ready to go singly or in numbers to any place they might be asked, in order to give temporary help to the parish priest or to missioners in places where there were no resident Sisters, or where the resident nuns were otherwise engaged. This was a new departure for religious women, but his Lordship and several priests to whom it was shown gave very cordial approval to the plan, and thought such work would satisfy a real need.

The first opportunity of putting this into practice was given to the little community through the kindness of the late Miss Anstice Baker. We were invited to join in the work conducted by the Catholic Missionary Fathers, whose Superior is the Rev. Herbert Vaughan, D.D. Each year one and sometimes two Tertiaries from Corpus Christi House have been among the workers with the Motor Mission : one has had the privilege of the charge of the motor chapel.

The plan of campaign is for the workers to go some days in advance of the Fathers, to see that the bills announcing the mission are well posted, and then, armed with a programme of the subjects to be treated of in the lectures, to begin a house-to-house visitation of the town or village.

Endless stories of thrilling interest might be told by every worker of her experience on the mission. Here is one which touched us deeply, knowing the reserve

of boys where sentiment of any kind is concerned. We were at F——, and the Tertiary in charge of the chapel was in some little difficulty owing to the extraordinary scarcity of flowers in the place. Some small boys of about ten or eleven one afternoon paid a visit to the open chapel. Their questions concerning everything in it were nothing if not exhaustive. The few flowers on the altar did not escape their notice nor their questions, and as simply as she could the Tertiary explained that Catholics believed that our dear Lord was called down upon the altar during Holy Mass, and that we desired to offer to Him in the Blessed Sacrament all that the world held of beauty. At length, their curiosity satisfied, the children departed. Hours afterwards, the Tertiary saw approaching the chapel four very hot and very dusty little boys, their arms laden with honeysuckle which they poured into her lap with the words: "They are for your Blessed Sacrament." Only by questioning in her turn did she become possessed of the information that they had walked miles round the cliff because they had no pennies for the ferry, and they had had no tea!

Every worker will bear testimony to the kindness and courtesy with which we are invariably received on this visitation, and there is an astonishing readiness on the part of our "separated brethren" to hear what Catholics really do believe.

There is work to be done not only with the motor chapel, but at the ordinary missions given to non-Catholics in our Catholic churches. To help with these the Tertiaries have been with Redemptorist and Dominican Fathers and with secular priests. After the mission is over, the already overworked, single-handed priest sometimes finds it difficult to keep in touch with those who have been attracted towards the

Church. In the *Missionary Gazette* for July 1914, after a mission to non-Catholics given by the Fathers of the Missionary Society, the parish priest wrote as follows: "It seemed at the outset a risk to have a mission at all, but there need have been no anxiety, for the non-Catholics wanted to come. How many converts? Well, these are early days yet. To gather the fruit is a work of much prayer and patience. The need just now is to find workers. Those who distributed the bills found a welcome everywhere. What is wanted now, in addition to our own people, who are goodness itself, is a lady or two with time to spare and the patience of the saints, to come and work among the people, say, for six months, and bring them in. But whether converts come or not, good has been done in confirming the waverer in our own Fold and removing the prejudices of those who are outside." Another priest wrote direct to the House to know if one Tertiary, or more if possible, could go for six weeks and prepare his little ones for their first confession and Holy Communion in a parish with no Sisters and no school. Alas! we were not able to respond to either appeal, on account of the lack of subjects and funds to meet the expense of such calls. I place them on record as examples of the crying need for more workers.

Our ideal for this particular kind of work would be to follow as nearly as possible the instructions which our Lord gave to His Apostles for their guidance. The parish to which we went would be asked to pay our travelling expenses, hospitality would be found for us in some respectable house, Catholic or non-Catholic, its poverty forming no obstacle. Our work ended, we should, if the resources of the parish permitted, be glad of an offering towards the support of the House, which might take the form of a collection at the church door.

INSTRUCTIONS.

Since the foundation of Corpus Christi House a large number of girls and women and some boys have received religious instruction here. These would fall into a number of different classes—converts; some engaged to be married to Catholics, some attracted by books, sermons or services, some drawn by Catholic friends and acquaintances; baptized Catholics who have never received any other Sacrament; unbaptized persons, the offspring most often of a mixed marriage; lapsed Catholics wishing to be reconciled to the Church; children in Protestant schools; children in Catholic schools.

Each soul is so different that this work, apart from its privilege, is most interesting; neither is it devoid of its humorous side, and a long list might be compiled of amusing answers and experiences—for instance, the answer of a small boy to the question, "How many Sacraments are there?" "Six for ladies and seven for gentlemen," or "There are two kinds of sin, mortal and genial."

Father Bede Jarrett tells us that the Dominican Order has a method of instruction of its own, a legacy of our holy Father, finding its expression in the Order's watchword, Truth. St. Dominic's children were "to pass up and down through the towns and villages and teach the people the truths of Christianity." It was not at all fierce and fiery denunciation of vice at which the Saint aimed. He was no mere moral prophet, flagellating the sins of society, but rather one who endeavoured by the simplest exposition of the Catholic faith to restore orthodoxy by the gentle inflow of light: his one object was the popularizing of theology: he hoped to stay the advance of heresy by pointing out how far the ideals of theology em-

bodied what was honest, just, lovely, and of good report. He took good wherever he saw it; he acknowledged truth wherever it was found.

Catechism.

To nearly every town there are outlying districts, just far enough from church and school to be a source of continual leakage. There is such a district outside Leicester, where for several years a Tertiary has gathered the children together in a room Sunday after Sunday for catechism. What an immense field of work this opens up, every priest in the land will bear witness.

Guilds.

The Tertiaries at Corpus Christi House have had charge of the parochial guilds for girls and women—the Children of Mary and the Guild of the Holy Angels for girls from thirteen to sixteen, which aims at enlisting them the year before they leave school, and so to prevent their drifting away, as experience teaches they so often do, when once removed from the Catholic influence exerted by their school and teachers. There is a St. Zita's Guild for Catholic girls in service, of all classes of the community often the most lonely. In a number of cases where the girls were not allowed to go regularly to Sunday Mass, it has been found that a visit from a Tertiary to the mistress has resulted in the necessary arrangements being made quite willingly.

Our Children of Mary did some things not common to all branches of this great Guild; for instance, they formed a Guild for married as well as single women. They performed a corporate work of charity by aiding the Society of St. Vincent de Paul: each Christmas they hold among themselves a little show of work, and

a number of useful garments are handed over to the Society. Besides helping with clothing, they have also undertaken to increase the funds of the S.S.V.P., and for this purpose give each year a play : two years in succession they gave Monsignor Benson's mystery play of the Nativity in a Unitarian hall to an audience consisting largely of Protestants. Our Lady's children had the joy at one of these of knowing that they had not only helped Christ's poor, but had done something for the honour of their Mother ; for a Protestant was overheard to remark : " I never thought of the Virgin Mary like that ! Wasn't she lovely ! " At the end of the play they were publicly thanked by the Unitarian minister. This is a double example of the good which may be done even by a play, and of the way in which distinct societies in a parish have worked together to their mutual advantage.

The Children of Mary issue to their members a tiny annual booklet in white and gold, containing a picture, a page of instruction from their Rev. Father Director, usually taken from his address on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, and a complete list of the names and addresses of the officers and members of the Guild. On the last page of the booklet is their motto for the year.

Retreats.

Linking all these spiritual works together comes the work of retreats. It was Father Plater, S.J., that apostle of the popular retreat, who helped and encouraged us to begin this.

There is no retreat house in this diocese, and in January 1914 we determined, with the permission of our Bishop, that Corpus Christi House should become one of Father Plater's " spiritual power stations." We

had almost every disadvantage. We were not nuns, and our house is not a convent. It adjoins the church and priory of the Dominican Fathers, but we have not the Blessed Sacrament under our roof. The house fronts upon the beautiful New Walk, along which no vehicle is allowed to pass, thus ensuring quiet, and our garden is made private by lovely trees : still it by no means offers those long and secluded walks among which retreatants are supposed to lose themselves. We are poor and our house is very simply furnished, and lastly, we were quite new to the work. There seemed nothing left to the imagination which could make for failure. We have had five in eight months, and our experience confirms all that Father Plater has said : indeed, the wording of his book is hardly strong enough. Every retreat has been a romance : in every one God has shown Himself as it were visibly. At every one something has been won for God. At the first, a gifted authoress, then outside the Fold, made her decision to be received into the Church : another saw five vocations settled : indeed, each of them has seen some generous life offered entirely to God.

Social Work.

For Catholics, social work should mean all those activities which bring Catholic principles and Catholic sympathy to the working out of our actual social conditions. It is not restricted to dealing with any one class or any one set of conditions. For example, the teachers in a convent boarding-school are as truly rendering social service to their country as those Catholics who are dealing with the problems of sweated labour. This is admitted by most people, but continually overlooked. The truism is repeated

because the phrase "social work" is about to be used in the narrower sense to which it is often restricted, namely, those activities which have for their object the poor, the oppressed, or the unfortunate in the world's struggle.

The retreats link up much of the more directly spiritual work. The *Catholic Social Year Book* for 1910 speaks of them as "a basis for social work," and continues: "The Catholic Church urges us to take part in social work; as Catholics we ar under a special obligation to promote social welfare. But our social work must be based on divine revelation. We must be guided by Catholic principles and steeped in the Catholic spirit, or we shall be, to a large extent, wasting our time. It would indeed be disastrous were Catholics to become so immersed in the details of social activity as to forget that their work is a means and not an end in itself."

In the letter already quoted, Father McNabb says: "A member of your community has been of service to the general well-being of Catholics in the town by accepting office on the Board of Guardians and other committees of organized charity." A writer in the *Catholic Social Year Book* says: "The mission of the Catholic Church . . . is becoming recognized by many thinking men outside the Fold." This has been our experience. We have found that our fellow-townsmen asked for ability and willingness to do work, in great measure irrespective of the question of religion, but sometimes with quite definite reference to it. For example, when pressure of other work made our representative think of retiring from the executive of the Health Society, she was begged to remain on as representing "a point of view which would not otherwise be put before them." On nearly every

committee of organized charity place has been gladly found for Catholics, and a mere list of these would show the enormous issues at stake, and about a vast number of them the Catholic worker has a definite message from the Church to the world.

Father McNabb specially mentions the Board of Guardians; it seems to me that any religious might take a tender pride in adding to her title of Spouse of Christ that she was also a Guardian of His poor. Into this area a Catholic must enter with a spirit very different from that of the most benevolent philanthropist, for to her they are not only the poor, they are *Christ's* poor; and she has behind her the traditions of the Church with regard not only to charity but to poverty. From this office of Guardian radiate works of almost every description, including the preservation of the faith of our Catholic children and the duty of adequate relief for those in need.

A Tertiary is on the Home Office list of prison visitors, and we are sometimes able to help women to make a fresh start when they come out. Even the saddest things in life have often, thank God, a little humour. One woman who had been released after serving a sentence which was not her first, came to Corpus Christi House: she was unknown to the Tertiary who let her in, and in answer to questions as to her wants, explained where she came from, ending with: "I have a cup of tea here most times."

Social Study.

Perhaps there is even greater need of pressing upon Catholics the necessity of social study than of urging upon them the duty of social work. One of our Tertiaries has worked upon the executive of the Catholic Social Guild from the time of its inauguration, and in Leicester

a study circle has been formed and affiliated to the Guild.

The work of the Interdenominational Conference of Social Service Unions is of sufficient importance to merit a word apart. The *Catholic Social Year Book* for 1913 says: "Catholics have not yet attained in this country to a summer school of their own—the *Semaine Sociale* that is so popular a feature of Catholic social effort in France and Italy has not yet crossed the Channel—but at least we have combined with others in making an interdenominational summer school a success. . . . The object of the School was to combine on a broad social platform to discuss those industrial and economic problems of the day on which agreement was possible and discussion would be useful, while respectfully leaving aside those religious aspects on which members were bound to differ. . . . The experiment proved an unqualified success. . . . That here and there opinions were expressed with which Catholics could not concur, was but a proof how desirable it is that Catholics should participate in such gatherings to explain our point of view. Equally valuable were the opportunities for friendly talk outside the official gatherings." At one of these informal talks a number of non-Catholics gathered round Father Plater to hear him speak on the Retreat movement.

Some fifteen Catholics took part in the School in 1913, and a Tertiary from Corpus Christi House read a paper on "Woman in the Home." There is something new in the facility with which we are allowed to give lectures when we are asked to do so. At one meeting, organized by Father Plater in the north of England, one of our Tertiaries gave an address on the Housing Problem. Such lectures offer great oppor-

tunities to Catholics; in this particular town, I believe, they have since banded together for the double purpose of studying the problem and bringing pressure to bear on the municipal authorities.

The Press.

Father Hugh Pope, O.P., once said that were St. Dominic alive now, he would not only say to his children "Preach," he would say, "Write." In the Catholic press some time ago appeared a strong appeal for more literature suited to children, and an effort was made to contribute our little towards supplying this need. The series known as the "Corpus Christi Books" is being undertaken by the Tertiaries here, and has received from reviewers and from the public a very kind welcome.

Every talent, indeed, could be immediately used for God, and that, after all, is the ennoblement of every gift. It has been urged sometimes by friends that our work is too varied, that it would be better for the whole community to specialize on some particular branch. I cannot think that St. Dominic would blame us about this. It is not the work but the spirit and the religious life which bestow unity. With regard to work there is hardly a field which has not been entered by his children, and certainly we have entered none which has not been traversed already by our brothers and sisters in the Order. Any little gift which God may have given a soul can find its use and its consecration in the hands of our holy Father. What would seem to be un-Dominican would be to have any talent and not to use it for God and souls. Far from curtailing our work, we hope that God will allow others possessed of different training to join us,

and so to use us, under obedience, in some fields at present barred.

IV.—Admission

If it is asked what we look for in those wishing to join us, and what they should look for in themselves, the first thing is a desire to give themselves to God, the God of the Blessed Sacrament, by the hands of St. Dominic, in order to work for the reunion of Christendom. We say the Divine Office according to the Dominican rite. The idea of undertaking the recitation of the Divine Office frightens some people on account of its length, but as it takes the place of all other vocal prayers, and as the Constitutions order that it shall "be said reverently yet quickly," we do not in reality spend more time in choir than many Sisters who say some shorter Office, while we have the very great privilege of taking a share in the Church's official prayer, her daily sacrifice of praise. Moreover, the love of the Church's liturgy is one which grows.

Since the House is poor, and most of its work is not of a kind to bring in money, it is desirable that those wishing to share our life should be possessed of a small income sufficient for their support, or have some qualification or training which can be put to the service of the community, and so prevent their being a burden to the resources of the House. This does not present any great difficulty, for plenty of work suited to the talents of all is crying out for workers.

A person asking to join us, if her request is granted, comes to the House for six months, during which time she is given every opportunity of studying the life which the Tertiaries here lead, and the work done. Though we are not religious, for convenience it seems

better to employ the words in general use for those wishing to join others living in community, so such a person is called a postulant. She wears a black dress and veil. At the end of six months, if she still wishes to remain, she petitions for the uniform worn by the Tertiaries of Corpus Christi House, if she is herself a Dominican Tertiary. If she is not, she asks for reception into the Order.

For the first five years no distinctive dress was worn, but it was felt that this was a disadvantage in our public work, and especially that it was difficult for outsiders to know that we formed a corporate body. In December 1913 we wrote to the Father Provincial and put the difficulties before him, asking his permission to adopt a Dominican uniform, which however should not be the holy habit. We received his approval as well as that of our Bishop, and agreed amongst ourselves to adopt a white woollen dress with a black cloak and a black veil, which we wore for the first time at midnight Mass on Christmas Day, 1913.

If the postulant receives the votes of the professed Tertiaries and is not herself already a Tertiary, she is clothed according to the form found in all Tertiary Manuals, is given the white uniform, and takes a name, by which she is then called by the other Sisters in the House.

For a year the novice has time to work chiefly at her own formation, to study the Constitutions, to learn to say the Divine Office, and to study those subjects most likely to be helpful to her in instructing others in the Catholic Faith. At the end of a year, if she again receives the votes of the community, she makes her profession as a Dominican Tertiary. In the case of a Tertiary already professed when joining us, she is received as a permanent member of the community,

and has a vote in matters connected with the reception of others.

V.—Daily Life

A general idea of the daily life of the Tertiaries may easily be gathered from what has been said. A few details may perhaps render the picture more clear.

At six o'clock the call is given by a Sister, who, according to the beautiful custom common to most religious houses, says, when she knocks at each door, *Benedicamus Domino*, and the first words spoken each day by the others are, *Deo gratias*.

Twenty-five minutes are allowed for dressing, and then all assemble in the chapel of the House for the Little Hours of the Divine Office. Vespers and Compline are said at two in the afternoon, Matins and Lauds at 6.45 p.m. On Saturday mornings, at 12.30, except during Easter and Whit weeks, the Office of the Dead is recited.

We are next to the Dominican Priory church, and, the Little Hours finished, we go in immediately to the seven o'clock Mass. Father Bede Jarrett has pointed out that it is characteristic of the Dominican Order that souls should not be forced to adopt any particular form of prayer, and so, though a special love of the Church's own prayers is certainly always in the spirit of the Order, each one is free to follow Mass as her own devotion may suggest.

We are to give to others the fruit of our own contemplation, and at a recent retreat we had put before us very strongly how impossible this is without serious meditation. Some idea of the importance attached to the practice of mental prayer in the Order may be gathered from the fact that any member not making at least half an hour shall for that day forfeit the suffrages

of the Order. We make our mental prayer during the second Mass at 7.30.

Breakfast is at eight; dinner at one; supper at 7.30. There is tea for those who wish to take it at 4.30. The Tertiaries here keep the fast and abstinence days of the Fathers of this Province as far as individual strength will permit. During dinner a book is read aloud.

At 8 p.m. the Rosary, the special gift of St. Dominic to his children, is said in the church; this and a visit to the Blessed Sacrament take the place of a second meditation.

At a fixed hour each day the Sisters meet for recreation, and each one is supposed to do her best to make it bright and interesting. At other times there is silence, only to be broken for what is necessary or useful. The intervals between these community duties are filled with the work of which an account has already been given.

If that work has brought to your mind the words of our Divine Lord, "The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few," I would beg of your charity that you would fulfil the precept with which He followed that statement, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth labourers into His harvest." Ask it, please, through the intercession of the great Saint who promised he would be more helpful to his children in heaven than he had been while on earth, and remind him that one of the most cherished titles of those for whom you pray is that of Children of St. Dominic.

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CATHOLIC FAITH AND PRACTICE IN MEDIÆVAL ENGLAND

By H. J. KILDUFF

INTRODUCTION.

THE task of a Catholic apologist to-day is a light one in comparison with what it was a hundred years ago. The old hatred is dying out. A great part of the English people have come to look upon Catholicism with respect and even favour. The Church of England, the official stronghold of Protestantism in this country even as late as the middle of the last century, has taken to itself much of the Old Faith, and is now verging on the crisis of a battle for the rest of it.

Even the Protestant bodies outside the Anglican Church show signs of change in their relationship with the Holy See. Very little, if any, hostile comment was made upon a sermon by the Rev. R. J. Campbell, wherein the speaker made known his desire that all Protestant bodies should approach Pope Pius the Tenth, as the natural leader of Christendom, with regard to a protest to all Governments against the burden of national armaments.

But this change of feeling towards the Catholic Church is even more strikingly manifested in the field of historical literature. Those who are interested in contrasts of thought, bearing on the same subject, would do well to compare the historical writings of Macaulay with those of a great modern

authority, himself also a Protestant, the late James Gairdner. We cannot dwell on either of these two writers here, but to point the contrast it may be remarked that Gairdner and Cardinal Gasquet are in substantial agreement upon the Reformation period, though the former was a pronounced Erastian of the Establishment while the latter is a Catholic historian.

Another factor in producing this reaction of feeling was created through the formation of the Early English Text Society about the middle of the nineteenth century. This Society has produced, in its translations of old English works, a vivid contemporary picture of Mediæval Catholic England.

But in spite of these influences, much of the old prejudice still remains. A proof of this, were any needed, would seem to be suggested in the significant fact that this very Society is at the present time sadly in need of funds, though a national work; while the Hellenist Society, which has nothing to do with England, is amply patronized. It would seem that these publications are too favourable to Mediæval Catholicism to be popular.

Whether this be so or not, there is still need to fight the great Protestant Tradition, still much work to be done on the canvas before reducing the lion of Newman's fable to its normal shape. And if this little pamphlet brings to the notice of any reader books which he might otherwise have never examined, the present writer will be well content with the result of his efforts.

In the concluding section of this paper a series of quotations is given from Old English wills. The significance to be attached to them in connection with Catholic faith and practice is simply this: they show the close relationship between the religious and social life of the people. The teachings of Christianity here

find practical expression and bear the fruits of Charity. In these wills we find social effort inspired and directed by faith, and it is this which connects them with a question much asked at the present day: Should religion figure in modern schemes of social reform?

An answer to this question is suggested in the conclusion of the article; here the subject only calls for brief remark. If the social life of the English people be carefully considered from its very beginnings even down to the present day, it would seem established that natural religion is the basis of the instinct in man towards social organization, and that Catholicism, that is, definite historic Christianity, enlightens such instinct and perfects such organization.

Religion and Social Life.

BEFORE entering upon a description of the faith and practice of English folk during the Middle Ages, a word of explanation will be necessary with regard to the influence of the religion of the people upon their social life. It is difficult for any man whose lot has been cast in these days of religious controversy, to realize the nature of the social life of men and women during that period in the history of our country when one religion sufficed for the spiritual needs of the nation; when the Sacrifice of the Mass was not one mode of worship out of many, but a national act, testifying to the belief of the whole people in an undivided Church.

The result of such unity of belief was to make the religious and social outlook one and the same. A "Religion of Humanity" could not have existed in England before the Reformation. It would not have been understood.

Belief in the existence of a Creator and Father of mankind had become woven into the very fibre of the nation's being. The founding of a hospital, the formation of a guild, even the institution of the "church ales" were alike religious and social acts. Every guild was a religious guild, the trade-guilds being under the protection of God and His Saints, and possessing due religious observances.

In the majority of cases, a man who built a hospital did so from a desire to love God the better through a love of the poor. The building of the hospital of St. Bartholomew by the pious Rahere, Court minstrel and afterwards priest, may be quoted as a typical instance of this.

If the wills drawn up by the good folk of the Middle Ages alone be studied, it will yet seem a just conclusion on the part of Cardinal Gasquet, that "religion and religious observances formed an integral part of the people's very existence." Nor need this be a matter for wonder, once it is realized how complete and efficient was the religious instruction of the people during the "Dark Ages" in England.

Ample material fortunately exists and every day becomes more easy of access, by means of which this conclusion may be investigated and tested. No deep course of study is needed to discover that the fundamental truths of Christianity were taught to men, women, and children in their mother-tongue, and that the Bible, both Old and New Testament, was an open book to them, though manuscript or printed texts were rare, or they themselves unable to read.

Popular Instruction.

The minute regulations of ecclesiastical statutes, English sermons and instructions, catechisms and treatises, frequently issued for

the advantage of cleric and layman alike, explain to us why Englishmen of this period had so thorough a knowledge of their religion. The early English Homilies are of great importance, owing to the insight they afford into the nature of the religion taught to the simple folk by their parish priests in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. A great number of these sermons were intended to impress upon the minds of the faithful the spiritual meaning of the penitential season of Lent. Continually does the preacher emphasize the necessity of shrift, or confession, which he explains clearly and simply as a sorrow for past sins, with a resolution to do better for the future.

"Dear Brethren and Sisters," proceeds the preacher in one of these homilies, "if we make confession of one or of two sins and yet follow one, God Almighty will not be well pleased. The priest may not shrive thee unless thou forsake all thy sins, both the one and the other. Know well that one sin will mar all the goodness and the alms and the amends thou dost for the other. A little poison envenometh much sweetness."

A sermon for the first Sunday in Lent conveys a warning to those who might be likely to make shrift a matter of routine :—

"In Lenten-time," says the preacher, "each man goes to confession ; there are some to whom there is greater harm in going than in abstaining, as I will now tell you. He saith with the mouth what is not in his heart, 'I will go to shrift for shame, as other men do ; if I neglect the priest will ask me on Easter Day who shrove me before he administers to me the Sacrament, and also for the sake of man's esteem.' He does not go as other [good] men do, but acts like the cheat who at last deceiveth himself, and is as a rosy apple—fair without and rotten within—alas ! that he will ever dare or think with his foul heart to receive so high and so holy a thing as is Christ's Flesh into his sinful body and thinketh It will help him. Nay, truly not, but when the priest putteth It into his mouth, then cometh the Lord's angel and taketh the holiness with him toward Heaven-Kingdom."

Later on the warning is repeated. Speaking of the torment of hell, lying in wait for the wicked, the preacher asks the question :—

"But to what men does this that I have mentioned happen? By Christ, it befalls those men that go to shrift more for the world's shame than for to repent of and be sorry for their sins. Wherefore will a man go to confession unless he is willing to forsake and repent of his sin? Of a truth if thou accusest thyself to thy confessor the devil may not accuse thee in the other life; for the man who conceals his sins in this life shall never behold the Almighty Lord nor aught of His bliss. How mightest thou see thy shadow in muddy water? What is shrift but to renounce the devil, and be sorry for, repent and bewail one's sins, and have in his mind never more again to commit those sins that he goeth to shrift for; to come to the priest and accuse himself, and say there what is in his mind, 'Alas! that I ever did with my wretched body those sins.' Repent of your sins for God's love while ye are here in this short life, and think how little time ye shall remain here."

After warning his flock against false shame in confession, the preacher proceeds to point out that it rests with the penitent whether his sins are to be forgiven or not. Shrift is not a charm or magic process by which a man may be forgiven without spiritual effort on his part :—

"Dear men, the priest is not able to forgive any man's sins, not even his own, but he is ordained between God Almighty and thee to instruct thee how thou shalt have forgiveness of thy sins from God; and he hath that same power from St. Peter to bind and to unbind, and from our bishop who is in St. Peter's office; and since he is unable to be in every place therefore there are priests under him."

More was demanded of men and women than mere external penances :—

"Dear men, though ye sin and repent, trust not wholly to your fasts if ye are able to do other good deeds. There is no man but what can do something more than fast."

Then follows a practical direction in the matter of the daily life. The people are told "to give as much alms" as they can afford, and to have Masses said for all Christian souls; to give to poor men shoes, clothing, meat, drink, warmth, and lodging; to visit the sick, to help to bury the dead, and to assist the poor with whatever they are able. "As water

quenches fire," we are told, "so alms quencheth sin."

The main argument of all these sermons is that a spiritual earnestness must underlie and be the motive force of our religious and social life. Neither the Sacrament of Penance nor the charitable work of almsgiving must be made a matter of routine; the living faith must be there or our labour is in vain.

The people were instructed very clearly as to the way in which Sunday should be honoured :—

"Now it becometh each Christian man so much the more to hallow and honour the day which is called Sunday, for of that day our Lord Himself saith, 'Sunday is a day of bliss and rest for all.' Let nothing be wrought on this day except to go to church and to pray to Christ, and to eat and drink in peace and gladness. For it is said, 'Peace on earth and peace among all Christian men.' Again our Lord Himself saith, 'Cursed be the man who will not observe Sunday.' And there, dear men, each Sunday is to be observed as Easter Day, for it is the commemoration of His Holy Resurrection from death to life, and commemoration of the Holy Ghost which He sent upon His Apostles on that day which is called Whit-Sunday. Moreover, we understand that on Sunday the Lord will come to judge mankind. We ought to honour Sunday very much and observe it in all purity, for it hath in it three worthy virtues, which ye may hear. The first virtue is that it on earth gives rest to all earth-thralls, men and women from their thrall works." Finally the preacher concludes : "Let each one then always observe the Sunday and the other holy days which in church we are commanded to keep like the Sunday, and let it be a participation of Heaven's bliss with the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost without end, Amen."

As a reference will be made later to the enactments of synods enjoining on parish priests the duty of teaching their flocks the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, it may be of assistance to the reader to have before him an example of such teaching, delivered by a parish priest to his unlettered flock.

A written instruction of this nature, dating from the twelfth century, is to be found in a

manuscript preserved in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge.

"Three things there are," says this instructor, "that each man must have who will lead a Christian life. The first is right belief ; the second is Baptism ; the third is fair life ; and he is not fully a Christian that is wanting in any of these three."

Then the need for each man to know his Creed and Lord's Prayer is pointed out. These are the groundwork for all future instruction :—

"You all know it [the Creed] as I suppose," the preacher continues, "though you do not all know what it signifies. But listen now and attend to it, and I will teach you by God's help, so that you shall know, and I will repeat to you the Creed word by word, and therewith what each word signifies."

This he does clearly and minutely. For a believer in God five things are necessary :—

"The first thing is to acknowledge Him as Lord over all things ; the second is to love Him above all things ; the third is to stand in awe of Him above all things ; the fourth is to honour Him above all things ; the fifth is to praise Him above all things. The man that hath in himself these five things hath in himself true belief, and if he be wanting in any thereof he is not a believing man. Now I have explained to you these five words, I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

Speaking of the work of Redemption, and of original sin (the latter quaintly described as " the deadly venom that the old devil blew upon Adam and his offspring "), the preacher proceeds :—

"But our Lord Jesus Christ, through His five holy wounds, shed His blood and gave it to mankind to drink, and therewith took out of them that deadly venom, and with His short death delivered them out of eternal death."

With regard to the relation between the Father and the Son, the instruction continues :—

"And He [Jesus] is therefore called the Heavenly Father's Son, for the Father is in the Son in three ways : the first is in power, for He is great and rightly above all things ; the second is in glory, for the moon and the sun are astonished at His

beauty, so beautiful is our Lord Jesus Christ ; and the third is in goodness, for He is full of all goodness."

On the subject of the Incarnation, the perpetual virginity of our Lady is brought out clearly :—

"Then answered the Lady St. Mary and said, 'I am Christ's maiden ; as thou hast said, so may it be.' Thus meekly answered the meek queen of Heaven and of earth, and of all creatures. And thus became our Lady St. Mary with child, thanked be our Lord Jesus Christ ; when the time came [she brought forth a child] so that she neither ached nor was her virginity impaired."

The Church is thus explained :—

"And I believe that the Church is God's holy house on earth, and is called in books 'The Lord's House,' and is thereto named because the heavenly King's body is therein as an ordinance ; and therefor men shall ever go thither and pray there, and hear God's words, and learn how they shall lead their lives in obedience to God, and so unite themselves in true belief that they shall be an habitation of God, so that they shall be turned to one Lord and to one baptism."

The Lord's Prayer, like the Creed, is fully and clearly explained. The preacher thus treats of the fatherhood of God :—

"We call Him Our Father for two reasons ; the first is because He created us and united the limbs to our bodies, and the soul thereto, the sight to the eyes, and the hearing to the ears, and to each limb its proper office. And so secretly has He put it [the body] all together, that the joining of each limb is unperceived ; and hereafter He will unite us when we shall arise from the dead."

God has not only created mankind, but it is He who gives man his food and thus enables him to live :—

"But especially is He the Father indeed of those who receive His holy flesh and His holy blood in right faith and true love. These are the righteous and godfearing men who lead their lives as they are taught in church."

"Hallowed be Thy Name" :—

"Blessed be Thy name in us, so that we may extol Thee in all our thoughts, praise Thee in all our words, and honour Thee in

our work, and love Thee above all things, and so merit it that we may have in common the token of Thy holy name."

"Thy Kingdom come" :—

"To some men our Lord Jesus Christ cometh and remaineth with them, and nevertheless reigneth not in them. Such are all those who have forsaken their sins, and according to the priest's instruction, earnestly repent."

Christ only reigns in the hearts of the god-fearing—

"who are void of sin and lay no store by all world's pleasure and love truly all living men, and are obedient to all God's behests, and are weary of this world and long for Heaven, and desire for nothing except what is according to God's will."

In our prayer for our daily bread, we are to remember that there are three kinds of food which nourish soul and body, material food and spiritual :—

"The third is the meat that each man ought to take with him when he shall depart this life, that is Christ's Holy Body, which giveth all men eternal life and bliss in Heaven."

A long discourse follows on the words "Lead us not into temptation." Three things bring about a man's fall : the instigation of the devil, the instability of the will, and the weakness of our fallen nature. The discourse concludes with the paraphrase, "But deliver us, Lord, from his [the devil's] temptation and from all evil. Amen."

Such was the nature and method of religious instruction in Mediæval England. The simple folk had explained to them in their own tongue the fundamental truths of Christianity. Not only were they taught the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Hail Mary, but ignorance of them was held to be a culpable neglect of duty, and therefore a matter for confession.

Duties of the Clergy.

Early in the thirteenth century, when the stormy period of John's reign was over, vigorous efforts were made by the bishops of the English Church to cope with the prevalent abuses of ecclesiastical discipline, and to provide for the adequate religious instruction of the people.

Two grave abuses called for immediate legislation. A considerable number of the clergy continued to take wives, and their sons were permitted to succeed to their benefices. As a remedy for these disorders, ecclesiastical statutes were issued to the clergy of the archdiocese of Canterbury, and to the clergy of Durham and Salisbury. These statutes, in accordance with the legislative reform of Pope Gregory the Seventh and his successors, strictly forbade clerics to marry, under penalty of suspension and deprivation. They also contained minute regulations with regard to religious instruction, the proper administration of the Sacraments, and the observance of charity.

The clergy were bound to teach their flocks the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and the articles of the Creed. They were to do this frequently and in the vulgar tongue, so that the simple folk might easily understand the articles of their Faith and Christian practices. Furthermore, all priests and beneficed clergy were bound to observe the precept of charity to the poor.

In the Oxford Constitutions of Archbishop Langton, the bishops were reminded of their duty to their spiritual children. They were to be charitable to all in need, to reside in their Cathedral churches, and were to have read to them, twice a year, the promises they had made at the time of their consecration to the episcopate.

The clergy were warned to feed their flocks

" with the food of God's Word, lest they should deservedly be adjudged dumb dogs." They were also to remember the promise of Holy Writ wherein " those who have visited the sick will be rewarded in the Eternal Kingdom," and to " hasten with joy to the sick " whensoever they might be called to them. Vicars were commanded to reside in their parishes, and it was enjoined upon all the clergy to avoid worldly pomp and live in chastity. In the Salisbury Constitutions, bishops were commanded to preach frequently, each in his own diocese, or to provide fitting substitutes, if unable to fulfil this urgent duty.

In the year 1237 a synod was held in St. Paul's Cathedral, under the presidency of Cardinal Otho, the papal legate. It was a great assembly, representative of the complete English Hierarchy. The statutes drawn up by the authority of this council are described by Cardinal Gasquet as forming for centuries the principal basis of ecclesiastical law in England. The council met to strengthen the discipline of the Church. The incontinency of clerics and the abuse of pluralities were again specially condemned. We find the same injunction upon all clergy entrusted with the cure of souls to instruct the people frequently on Sundays in the mother tongue on religious matters, and particularly on the importance of the sacrament of Baptism.

By measures such as these, the bishops enabled the clergy to exercise an efficient spiritual influence upon a people greatly in need of it, harassed as they were by the excessive taxation of the Roman Curia, and scandalized by the continued appointment of foreign clerics to English benefices, as a reward for service to the Holy See. The bishops by means of visitations and synodical constitutions met their responsibilities, and thus possibly averted a

schism which at one time appeared imminent. No doubt much of the spiritual activity of the Church at this period was due to the reforming zeal of Bishop Grosseteste. He was strict in his visitations and exacting in his selection of candidates for the priesthood. He exerted his influence against the intrusion of foreign clergy into his diocese, and for a brief period was even suspended for refusing to appoint an Italian to a benefice within his jurisdiction. Such a man was invaluable in combating the abuses of his day, which mainly centred upon the appointment of unworthy or unsuitable clerics to vacant livings. Three ecclesiastical constitutions, dating from 1246 to 1250, are selected by Cardinal Gasquet as typical of the nature of the statutes issued by the bishops during this period. Their general purpose is to provide the parochial clergy with a summary of Christian doctrine, simply and clearly expressed, so as to enable them to teach efficiently all under their charge. Thus the statutes of Chichester explain the teaching of the Church on the seven Sacraments, special attention being paid to Baptism and Confession. The parish priest is to explain to the people how they are to administer the Sacrament of Baptism in cases of necessity. Parents must present their children for Confirmation within a year of their attaining the required age, and priests are to ask their penitents if they have received this Sacrament : if they have not, they are to be sent to the bishop without delay. Priests are to labour for the salvation of their flocks, to assist the poor, to reside in their own cures, and to attend to neighbouring hospitals and perform other works of charity. Finally the laity must know their Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Hail Mary, all three of which must be explained to them diligently and frequently in their native language.

The statutes of York mention very minutely the various works parishioners are bound to perform for their churches. The fabric of the church must be kept in repair with the exception of the chancel; and sacred vessels, vestments, books, statues, and many other articles for church use must be provided by them.

According to the statutes of Durham, the people are frequently to be taught the Commandments, and on Holy-days and Sundays they are to hear instructions on the articles of Faith and the Sacraments.

In the year 1281 Archbishop Peckham of Canterbury summoned a council of bishops and prelates to consider a remedy for certain disorders among clergy and laity, due primarily to the ignorance of theology on the part of a considerable number of the clergy.

"The ignorance of priests," writes the Archbishop in the preface to his Constitutions, "hastes to throw the people into the pit of error, and foolishness and lack of discipline among the clergy, who are bidden to instruct the minds of the faithful in the Catholic Faith, more often impel to error than to doctrine."

To provide for the instruction of the people, the Archbishop had appended to his Constitutions a summary of Christian Doctrine, lest "any priest should excuse himself through the plea of ignorance" from the performance of this duty.

The statute on religious instruction runs as follows:—

"We order that every priest having the charge of a flock do, four times in each year (that is, once each quarter), on one or more solemn feast days, either himself or by some one else, instruct the people in the vulgar language, simply and without any fantastical admixture of subtle distinctions, in the articles of the Creed, the ten Commandments, the Evangelical Precepts, the seven works of mercy, the seven deadly sins with their offshoots, the seven principal virtues, and the seven Sacraments."

"Now it is obvious," writes Cardinal Gasquet, in his comment upon this statute, "that if four times a year this law was com-

plied with in the spirit in which it was given, the people were very thoroughly instructed indeed in their faith. But was this law faithfully carried out by the clergy and rigorously enforced by the bishops in the succeeding centuries? That is the real question. I think that there is ample evidence that it was. In the first place, the Constitutions of Peckham are referred to constantly in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as the foundation of the existing practices in the English Church."

The decree of a diocesan synod, drawn up in the middle of the fourteenth century, is selected as an illustration of the above remark. It runs as follows :—

"That all rectors, vicars, or chaplains holding ecclesiastical offices shall expound clearly and plainly to their people on all Sundays and feast days the Word of God and the Catholic Faith of the Apostles ; and that they shall diligently instruct their subjects in the articles of Faith, and teach them in their native language the Apostles' Creed, and urge them to expound it and teach the same Faith to their children."

The Constitutions of Archbishop Thoresby of York, issued during the latter half of the fourteenth century, also closely resemble those of Peckham, the preface to each Constitution being practically the same. Moreover, as late as the year 1450, we find in the opening phrases of John Myrc's English didactic poem on pastoral theology the preface to Peckham's statutes reproduced.

Such evidence supports the view that these statutes were accepted and observed by the English clergy as a whole, and that later Constitutions and treatises, drawn-up as occasion demanded, made them the basis of legislation and instruction.

It will have been noticed with regard to the statute previously quoted, that parents are urged to teach the faith to their children.

Although of a later date, the following prayers, included in a book of devotion called *The Boke of Nurture*, will give us some idea of the prayers composed for the benefit of the children of the Middle Ages.

Some stress is laid on the virtue of early rising :—

"Ryse you early in the morning
For it hath propertyes three
Holinesse, health, and happy welth,
As my father taught mee.
At syxe of the clock, without delay
Use commonly to ryse
And give God thanks for thy good rest
When thou openest thy eyes."

The following prayer is to be said at night :—

"Upon my ryght side y me lay
Blesid lady to the y prey
For the teres that ye lets
Upon your swete sonnys feete
Send me grace for to slepe
And good dremys for to mete
Slepyng wakyng til morowe daye bee
Our Lorde is the frute, our Ladye the tree,
Blessid be the blossom that sprange lady of thee.
In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Amen."

Thus the work of the Mediæval Church continued. Bishops instructed their clergy, and the clergy in turn taught the people the same fundamental truths of Christianity which Macaulay fondly imagined to have been the peculiar birthright of the first Protestant generation of the sixteenth century.

The articles of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Hail Mary were made to comprise practically the whole teaching of Christianity. By means of the Creed, the people were told of the Blessed Trinity, the Redemption of mankind by Christ, and the spiritual work of the Church in the Sacraments. The Lord's Prayer gave them the idea of the Fatherhood of God, taught them to look to God for their material and spiritual food, and showed them the virtue of forgiveness of injuries.

It would not be inappropriate at this point to quote the remark on Mediæval Christianity made by Macaulay in the preface to his

History of England. The historian, with every appearance of desiring to be just, submits that this religion should not be considered "unmixedly noxious," and elsewhere carefully distinguishes "the doctrine of the priesthood" from the "benevolent spirit of Christian morality," a special characteristic, we are to presume, of a later and Protestant age.

More than a century was to elapse before another great reforming bishop issued to his clergy a series of ecclesiastical statutes. And when this was done, Mediæval England was already in the process of dissolution. The Great Plague of 1349 had been devastating England for some three or four years, when Archbishop Thoresby of York renewed the Constitutions of Peckham. They were needed. No class fared worse than the clerical body during the attacks of the pestilence. Ecclesiastical discipline was wholly disorganized, and any general education of candidates for the priesthood was out of the question. For twelve years the plague ravaged England. At last it exhausted itself; but before this happened two millions of the people had perished. Of these, five and twenty thousand were clerics. The result of such mortality was a collapse of the ecclesiastical and social system obtaining in the country. Only after a century and a half of heroic labour could the survivors, and those succeeding them, effect what Cardinal Gasquet describes as "a wonderful social and religious recovery from a state almost of dissolution."

After the "Black Death."

Such was the tragic close of the Mediæval Age. In its death throe it gave birth to our modern problem of Labour in arms against Capital. From this time the villeins and labourers are to begin their quest for freedom

and a satisfactory wage ; and though the Black Death must be considered, in the light of after-events, as a calamity outweighing in evil the good traceable to it, yet the benefits resulting from it were real and of far-reaching effect. The scourge of leprosy, so prevalent in England until the visitation of the plague, ceased to afflict the people, so few lepers survived to continue it. The farm-labourers, hitherto tied to the soil, obtained their freedom ; for the great decrease in their number had made the demand for the survivors greater than the supply. Such a condition gave the peasants a power which even the King and Parliament could not effectually resist. And, more important still, as the basis of future endeavour, was the awakening of a new religious spirit among the people. An apparently irreparable disaster had befallen the nation, but the character of Englishmen in that age was specially adapted to meet it.

For centuries the character of the people had been formed and strengthened in the school of faith, with the result that when the immediate shock of the plague had passed, the people became reanimated with that spirit of enduring hopefulness which was the direct outcome of their religious training.

Amid the general ruin this was their chief asset. The gradual work of restoration may be said to date from the revival by Archbishop Thoresby, during the actual ravages of the pestilence, of the Constitutions of Peckham. So interwoven was the religious with the social State that a reform of ecclesiastical discipline would naturally react upon the general habit of life among the people. There can be no doubt as to the severity of the test to which the faith of the people was subjected. Wyclif, a man of ability and spiritual earnestness, who could have done much for the reform of society,

placed himself in opposition to the religious teaching of the day, founded a party at variance with both Church and State, and died "at a moment," writes Green, "when little had been done save a work of destruction." His legacy to the nation was the Lollard party, which Green admits to have been in no sense an organized movement, after his death, but merely the embodiment of a general spirit of revolt. In more outspoken language James Gairdner describes Lollardy as "by no means an innocent attempt to secure freedom for individual judgement," but "a spirit that prompted the violation of order and disrespect to all authority." England was in a pitiable plight. Half the population had perished, twenty-five thousand clerics had succumbed, and the Lollard spirit of revolt was at work upon what was still left of ordered society.

But the faith of the people was destined eventually to triumph over the material and spiritual calamities of pestilence and heresy. The revival of a genuine religious spirit soon became evident. A whole school of spiritual writers came into being at this period. Their works have hitherto been classed as Wyclifite tracts, but a more careful investigation has shown them to be genuinely Catholic in tone and spirit.

The Place of the Mass.

The wills of the fifteenth century, drawn up some fifty years after the coming of the great plague, show how fully the religious feeling of the people had revived. These wills do not merely concern themselves with the disposition of property. Each will is a testimony in writing to an intelligent, practical, and devout acceptance of the truths of Christianity, embodied, as we have seen, in the teaching of the Catholic

Church in England. They are as much religious as legal documents, and, as an expression of the religious view of the people, constitute invaluable evidence as to the nature of the faith and practice of English Folk in the later Middle Ages. As the Sacrifice of the Mass figures prominently in all these wills, and as this circumstance has attracted the unfavourable notice of the editor of the collection previously mentioned, a brief explanation of what the Mass implied to the writers of these wills may be useful. For the men and women of this period the Sacrifice of the Mass was without doubt the centre of all spiritual life. Why this should be so was explained in a popular book of instruction entitled *Dives et Pauper*—a dialogue between a rich man and a poor man. The Mass is defined as follows :—

"The Mass is the highest prayer that Holy Church can devise for the salvation of the quick and the dead. For therein the priest offereth up the highest Sacrifice and the best offering that any heart can devise, that is Christ, God's Son in Heaven, under the form of bread and wine."

It should be carefully noted that the spiritual value of the Mass depends upon the fact that Christ, the Son of God, acts through it as the supreme mediator between God and man. Reception of grace through the Mass means nothing other than reception of grace through Christ. To hear Mass without being in communion with Christ would be impossible. This fact, once grasped, will enable the reader to judge for himself whether or not these wills may be fairly adduced as evidence of a genuine devotion to the person of our Lord on the part of the people.

To Catholics then, as to Catholics of every age, the Mass was a setting of rite and observance wherein Christ was fully revealed as the Redeemer of mankind. Hence the Mass closes

appropriately with the opening chapter of the Gospel of St. John :—

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we saw His glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth."

In connection with bequests of money for Masses, it should be remembered that the Mass was believed to be the chief means of applying the merits of Christ's death to the redeemed souls in purgatory, so that they might the sooner enter into perfect union with God. These bequests had a secondary but very useful object. The money so left provided poor priests with a means of support, enabling them to do much useful work as curates to parish priests and as teachers of the village children in grammar schools. It will enable readers to realize the devotion of the people to their daily Mass, if a brief list of the hours at which Mass was celebrated in many of the parish churches during this period is laid before them.

In the year 1482 the mayor and commonalty connected with the parish church of Henley-on-Thames arranged that the priest of the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary should say Mass every day at six o'clock, and the chantry priest of St. Catharine's at eight o'clock in the morning. Early morning Mass was said in Lincoln Cathedral at five o'clock every morning in St. Chad's chapel. In Lichfield Cathedral Masses were said each hour from six to ten o'clock in the morning ; then High Mass was sung, and afterwards the last or travellers' Mass was said. According to the terms of an endowment of a chantry at Nottingham, a priest was "to say Mass every morning before sun-rising for such as be travellers by the way, and to maintain God's service there." At Barnard's Castle the Guild of the Holy Trinity paid for a priest to say Mass daily at six o'clock in the

morning. This guild also provided a free grammar school and a song school for all children in the town. In the church of St. Mary Magdalene, Newark, Mass was said for the people at four o'clock in the morning. At Bury St. Edmunds, the greater part of the necessary funds for the early-Mass priest was "gathered weekly of the devotion of the parishioners."

This list may be appropriately closed with a description of the manner in which the folk of a certain village heard their daily Mass. The passage occurs in a letter written by a Venetian traveller, giving an account of his experiences in England.

"They attend Mass every day, and say many 'Our Fathers' in public. The women carry long rosaries in their hands, and any who can read take the office of Our Lady with them, and with some companion recite it in church, verse by verse, in a low voice, after the manner of Churchmen."

Some Mediæval Wills.

The English people had a genuine devotion to the Mass, and in their wills this highest act of worship had special place.

Two quotations from the wills edited and published by the Early English Text Society illustrate the regard English folk of the Middle Ages had for the Mass. John Credy, in a will dated 1426, founds a perpetual chantry; that is, he leaves money to provide for an additional curate at the church of St. Alphege on condition that the priest selected say Masses for the testator's soul.

"Also I will that my wife have my place called Childerhouse, in Middlesex, the term of her life to sustain a priest in the chapel of Weston . . . and also I will that there be founded a perpetual chantry of the tenement called the Cock in Grub Street with the cottages annexed thereto, and other his appertinance to find a perpetual priest to sing for my soul, my father's soul, my mother's soul, and for all Christian souls, in the church of St. Alphege, at the altar of our lady St. Mary."

In the second quotation the testator directs that thirty Masses "in the wise of a Trental of St. Gregory" should be said for the repose of his soul. By this was meant that three Masses should be said on each of the ten great feasts of the ecclesiastical year—that is to say, three Masses on Christmas Day, the Circumcision of our Lord, the Purification of our Lady, the Annunciation of the Angel Gabriel, the Resurrection of our Lord, His Ascension, the Feast of Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, the Assumption and the Nativity of our Lady.

The will of William Fitz-Harry, of London, dated 1431, runs as follows :—

"In the name of the Holy blessed Trinity, our sovereign lady St. Mary, and all holy saints, Amen. I, William Fitz-Harry, being in good health and in my full wits, make my testament in this manner. First I bequeath my soul to God, my very lord and saviour, for to abide his gracious ordinance and mercy, and my body to be buried there as he hath of his grace ordained, and to that place I give £10 of gold. And I will there sing 5 year for me and for those that I am most bound to pay for, a true priest, and that I will it be Friar William, if it be so that he have leave of his provincial and of his house, and else I will have the best liver that may be gotten. And I will this priest have each year £10, that is to say in five year £50. And I will have done for me the first day after that my soul is passed, 30 masses in the wise of a Trental of St. Gregory ; and when this is done I will the best priest that may be found say for me the said Trental [of St. Gregory] with the whole dirige and all the services throughout the year and the priest to have £10. And I will that on my body be laid a fair stone of marble with my crest . . . and my word—mercy and joy—to which word I take me fully for evermore . . . and I will there be dealt for me in haste to poor folk £10 . . . and this I ask of them [the executors] that they do this truly and kindly for the love and at the reverence of all-mighty Jesus in whose mercy and grace I put me wholly both body and soul for evermore."

The making of a will, in the days we are treating of, seems to have been not merely an act of prudence but also a solemn religious act, a declaration before God made by the testator, testifying to his adherence to the

Catholic-Roman Faith during life and his desire so to do at the moment of death.

In these wills we see how successfully the religious spirit permeated the legal atmosphere. And here is evidence of a direct nature, that the religious and social outlook of the Middle Ages were one and the same. The prefaces to the four wills quoted below will convey to the reader the religious aspect of Mediæval will-making. Thomas Broke of Devonshire, 1417, had drawn up for him the following will :—

"In the name of the Lord of all lords, the Almighty Immortal Trinity, I wretched sinner, Thomas Broke, in good mind and out of sickness, make my testament, if it be the will of God, in this manner, praying Him of His high endless mercy, vouchsafe to receive my wretched unclean soul into His mercy, and keep it from damnation, for the meek passion and death that His debbonaire Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, suffered on the cross for charity and pity of mankind. And my will is that my body be buried in the church of the parish of Thorncombe, as men go over into the church at the south side, right, as they may step on me, and a flat plain stone, save my name graved therein that men the rather have mind on me and pray for me."

John Olney has, in his will, the following act of faith :—

"In the name of God, in the year of the Lord 1420, the twelfth day of May, I John Olney of Weston Underwood, make my testament in this wise. At the beginning I bequeath my soul into the mercy of Merciful Jesus, praying Him for His precious passion that He reserve me unto the broad bosom of His mercy, praying furthermore to His mother, our Lady St. Mary, mother of mercy, to St. John the Evangelist, St. John Baptist, and to all the saints of Heaven, that may be [mindful] of me, and helpers to me at my most need. And I bequeath my body to be buried in the chapel of our Lady in the church of St. Nicholas of Weston, and my best beast in the name of principal [offering]."

A grocer of London, Richard Gravely by name, has a will made as follows :—

"In the name of God Amen. I Richard Gravely of London, grocer, ordain and grant my testament in this manner. First I bequeath my soul to our Lord God Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth, praying and beseeching our Lady St. Mary, the

mother of our Lord Jesus, and all the company of Heaven, to pray for me to our Lord Jesus our Saviour, that I may have mercy and forgiveness of sin. Also I bequeath my body to be buried in the porch of the church of All Hallows Barking, beside the tower of London, on the south side of the church."

Another edifying will occurs under the name of one Thomas Broke of Cobham :—

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, so be it now and for ever, the twelfth day of February, the year from the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1438, I, Thomas Broke, knight and lord of Cobham, being in whole mind and good wit, make my testament in this wise. First I beseech the most blessed Trinity to have mercy upon me, and that through the prayer of the blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of all the Saints that be in heaven, that I, a wretched sinner, might the rather to have grace worthily to bewail my sins before that my soul depart out of this world, so that it may be found clean and worthy through true repentance to be received into the bliss that ever shall last."

Faith and Charity.

Selections from these wills may now be given to illustrate the method of bestowing alms. It should be kept in mind that the quotations are not exceptional but typical of all such documents. A spirit of faith and charity inspires each will. Legacies are drawn up to benefit almost every class of sufferer, poor folk, lepers, those who are sick, men in prison, debtors, tenants who cannot pay their rent, and poor but honest maids who have no marriage portion. The prayers of the poorest are coveted, and their presence at the Mass of Requiem is valued.

The will of Richard Bokeland, of Thames Street, London :—

"First I betake my soul unto God, my very lord and saviour and to his blessed mother our lady St. Mary and to all his saints of heaven. And my wretched body to be buried at Pardon church-yard at St. Paul's in London. Also I give unto the works of Paul's £10. Also I will that there be founded at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, . . . two good

honest and virtuous priests of conversation the term of twenty years, praying for the souls of me, my father, mother, brother and for all those that I am bounden to pray for. . . . and if there remain anything of the said 20s. to be dealt to every poor man of that parish 2d, and all those poor men to be at the Dirige and Mass. Item I give to every prisoner being in Ludgate and Newgate 4d. Item to the Abbot's prison of Westminster 20s. ; Item to the prisoners of the Fleet 20s., Item to the prisoners of the Marshalsea 20s., Item to the sick people being in the spital houses of saint Thomas, saint Mary, and St. Bartholemew of London £3, Item to the houses of lazare next about London £3, also I will that Dame Cicely Gifford Prioress of Cheshunt have £40. . . . Item I will to every couple of man and wife dwelling in Ochecote have 2s., and to every single man and child within the same parish of Ochecote 1s. . . . and I pray and require all you mine executors aforesaid, which I have chosen, for true and perfect love, that ye fulfil all my will and entent above written truly and kindly for the love of God and as my trust is in you."

The sums of money mentioned often appear very trifling, but their purchasing value in relation to the prices of articles at the present day must be estimated at ten or twelve times the amount stated. For instance, the halfpenny loaves left to the poor, in one will, would equal two of our modern loaves. The will of Thomas Walwayn, of Much Marcle, Herefordshire, dated 1415, benefits men imprisoned for debt, poor needy folk and poor young women.

"Also I wish that the third part of the money that may be had of Dene and Chalford be set by mine executors upon the making of the steeple of the church of Marcle ; the second part of the same good I will that it help needy men out of prison . . . there most need is ; the remnant I will it be parted in two, half to the poor needy folk that be in Marcle parish (and other neighbouring parishes) ; and that other half be given to the marriage of poor young women in the same parish . . . and I will that there be 1000 masses said for me of good priests with all haste and my debt paid and restitution made there any wrong may be found be done, as I trust to God but little, by mine executors."

Another will, that of Thomas Broke, already referred to, 1417, contains a generous legacy to poor tenants, and an equally generous one to poor men, blind and lame.

"And I bequeath to all my poorest tenants, where that they be . . . £100 in money, and I bequeath to poor men blind and lame £100, and to some true man by good discretion to divide the money foresaid, and namely if I have done wrong to any of my tenants or mis-taken their good [property] I will that it be restored to them whether it be man or woman."

The will of Sir Roger Salwayn contains an interesting clause. A sum of money is directed to be put aside for the equipment of "some good man" who will make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem on behalf of the testator. Legacies for pilgrimage by proxy occur elsewhere in the wills of this period, but owing to the costly nature of the undertaking are not frequent. As this feature of pre-Reformation wills has incurred the special censure of Dr. Furnival, editor of *Fifty Earliest English Wills*, it would be as well to remind any reader who might be influenced by such criticism, that to visit a nation for the purpose of paying respect to it, is accepted by all civilized countries as a rational method of procedure. This is instanced in the case where royalty is represented at a state function of a foreign Court in the person of an ambassador. The fact that the good Sir Roger desired, after his death, to show respect, in the person of another man, to the country of his Saviour, may be taken as reasonable evidence for the vivid and practical nature of his faith. Nor does there seem to be any evidence in any will of a cowardly desire to escape the pains of Purgatory at the expense of the just claims of charity.

John Pyncheon, citizen and jeweller of London in the fourteenth century, makes the following bequests in his will :—

"I will that the money [from certain lands sold] be spent as follows : to the poor men that have been men before of good conversation, some man twenty shillings and some 2 marks and some 40 shillings after that their state has been before, and that they be of the same parish, and of Peter and Christopher and of other parish next thereby : and where I may know any poor

lame [folk] or poor blind, in any place in the town, that they have clothes to cover them from cold and sheets to them that have need. And to the prisoners of Newgate, an allowance by the week during one year ; and to the poor lepers an allowance by the week for one year. And that the house be sold and the alms be given in the worst year. And where men may espy any poor man of religion, monk, canon, or friar that they have of my good [property] the goods and among the poor each man 6^{s}. and 8^{d}. that be priests."

The will of Lady Peryne Clanbowe, dated 1422, has a legacy in favour of her tenants :—

"Also I bequeath to clothe with 200 poor men 20. . . . the residue for such of all my goods in this my testament not bequeathed, I give and bequeath to mine executors, by their discretion to be disposed, that one half to my poor tenants and that other half to good men faithful and needy that be in disease."

The following clause occurs in the will of John Girdeler of the fourteenth century :—

"Also I bequeath to six score poor bedrid men and women where as they may be found the day of my burial at Westminster or hastily after, every man and woman for the love of God 4d."

In the year 1408, during the reign of Henry IV, John Plot, maltman of London, had the following clause made in his will :—

"Also my will is that maidens of good fame and of good name have 10 marks of my property to their marriage."

The will of Nicholas Charlton contains a reference to the guilds which were so prominent a feature in the method of life during the Middle Ages. These guilds were societies formed for the support of religion, the observance of charity, and the protection of trade. They were maintained for the most part by voluntary subscriptions and legacies in money or land. They constituted, among the people, the chief organized system of mutual help and charity, and exercised functions equivalent to those of Assurance, Friendly, and Provident Societies at the present day. Religious observ-

ances formed an integral part of their constitution. In the towns, where they chiefly flourished, they may be said to have composed the framework of the religious, social, and business life of Mediæval English folk.

The will of Nicholas Charlton :—

"In the name of God Amen . . . I Nicholas Charlton citizen and skinner of London, in whole and good mind being, thanked be almighty God, ordain and make my testament of my last will in this form that followeth. First I bequeath my soul to almighty God my maker, our Lady St. Mary and to all saints of heaven and my body to be buried in Paul's great church yard of London before the cross . . . and I will and ordain that in all haste possible after my decease that I have three Trentals of Masses sung for my soul in three houses of Friars of London, that is to say the preachers, white friars and grey friars. And I bequeath 1000 of halpeny loaves to be given to poor men by my executors within 12 months after my decease, that is to say to every poor man that cometh, a loaf. Also I bequeath to the brotherhood of my craft of Corpus Christi to the common box thereof 6s. and 8d., and to the common box of the brotherhood of our lady in my craft 6s. and 8d. Also I bequeath to every prisoner in the prison of Ludgate and each of the two counters [prisons] in London, a loaf of a pound to be delivered when corn is of reasonable price within a year of my decease."

The will of John Toker, vintner of London, may appropriately close this brief series of quotations. The charitable legacies are so many and varied that the document containing them is given almost in full.

"Also I bequeath," runs the document, "to be distributed among poor folk, dwelling in the foresaid parish of St. Mildred, for to pray for my soul, 40s. Also I bequeath to be distributed among prisoners in the prisons of Ludgate, Marshalsea, Kingsbench, and the Counter's in London, that is to say in every of the said prisons, the prisoners to pray for my soul, 20s, and among the prisoners in the Fleet and the Clerk's Convict at Westminster, that is to say in every of the two prisons, to pray for my soul, 10s.

"Also I bequeath to be distributed among poor folk lying sick in the spital of Our Lady, without Bishopsgate, Our Lady of Bedlem, Our Lady of Elsing Spital, of St. Bartholemew in Smithfield, and St. Thomas in Southwark, in every spital to pray for my soul, six shillings and eightpence. . . . Also I will that mine array and clothing to my body longing, anon after my decease, be sold, and the money thereof coming and taken, I will that it be divided and parted among poor folk lying

bedrid, and in other works of charity most pleasing to God and the health of my soul. Also I give and bequeath to the marriage of honest and poor maidens, to be distributed among them after the will and discretion of my executors, thirteen pounds six shillings and eightpence. Also I will that a discreet and able priest be chosen after the good discretion of my executors, to sing and read for my soul and all Christian souls in the foresaid church of St. Mildred, during the term of three year next suing after my decease, also I bequeath to the sustentation of that said priest for the foresaid term of three year £20."

The Basis of Social Effort.

It will have been noticed by the reader that his attention has been frequently directed to the close connection existing between the religious belief of the people and their method of charity to the poor and unfortunate. Whatever may be the case at the present day, there can be no doubt that the religious idea constituted, in mediæval England, the basis of all social effort. The position of men and women in the religious thought of their day entitled them to a place in the social life. The poor and the rich had a common father in God. Dives, in our Lord's parable, was in very reality the brother of Lazarus, and the punishment which befell the former was a consequence entailed through a neglect of this bond of brotherhood. The rise of a "Religion of Humanity" in more modern days has, of course thrown this fundamental principle of Christian ethics into disrepute. Hence the pertinence of an analysis of the structure of Mediæval social life.

It is not within the scope of this pamphlet to contrast the humanitarian with the religious theory of social life. It is, however, legitimate to consider whether this brief survey of religious teaching and social effort may not affect the extreme position of those advocates of reform who would, as their first step, banish the religious idea from all social schemes. It should be observed that this suggested method

has no precedent in the past history of our race to serve as an augury of success. The extreme theory is an experiment.

On the other hand, it can be seen, even from this brief glimpse of the Mediæval outlook on life, that the greater part of the efforts made to alleviate poverty and distress had for their driving power a vivid faith in a God who was both Creator and Father of mankind.

With regard to the hasty and sweeping measures of reform so much in favour among anti-religious extremists, it ought to be kept in mind that an ideal social condition can hardly be achieved save by a gradual process; for such a condition must be the fruit of a steady growth in idea and practice. A revolution may invert the position of oppressors and oppressed, but it will not make them equal.

Nor may this ideal be realized without the co-operation of each unit of the community. In this respect, religion, as usually understood, should prove more efficacious than a religion of humanity, for it can appeal to every class of human being, and so act as a stimulus to society as a whole, while the philosophic substitute for religion is too impersonal, too coldly intellectual to kindle any large section of the community to a glowing zeal for their neighbours' good. Some theory must be constructed to enable poor and rich alike to realize the existence of a bond of brotherhood. No materialistic scheme of life can evolve so mystic a bond.

Since the disaster of the Reformation, the religious and social outlook have become more and more separate. To-day a multitude of religious views has possessed the people as a plague of tongues. The process of constructing the social fabric is thus rudely interrupted. One cries out for mortar, another for stone, and none understand them, nor they each other.

And so the old prophecy, much mocked at, of the building of the Tower of Babel has at last been fulfilled in modern England. No need for wonder that men are now crying out against religion as a hindrance in the social field. There is much to excuse them. But the Catholic who has studied the history of his race, however great may be his desire for social reform, never can give consent to any scheme which has for its direct purpose the deepening and perpetuating of that initial error of the Reformation—the divorce of the religious from the social life.

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